

DRAMATIC RECITALS

AND HOW TO DELIVER THEM

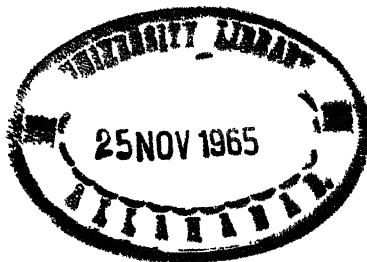
A GUIDE TO THE
ART OF DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES EXPLAINED IN
"TWENTY-FOUR LESSONS IN ELOCUTION"

BY

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Believe me, the true artist never lingers fondly upon what he has done. He is ever thinking of what remains undone, ever striving towards an ideal it may never be his fortune to reach.

SIR HENRY IRVING,
(Addresses on the Drama)

"I have been told of a race of actors who were fitted to be part of the most durable theatre it is possible to conceive. When I heard of this I was pleasurably astounded. I was told that this race of actors was so noble, sparing themselves no pain and austere disciplining themselves, that all the weaknesses of the flesh were eradicated, and nothing remained but the perfect man. This race was not English or American, but Indian. I am not sceptical. I would sooner be proved wrong in all my beliefs and theories than think man unable to rise to any standard known or to be known."

EDWARD GORDON CRAIG,
(The Theatre Advancing).

ACHIEVEMENT

Trust in thine own untried capacity
As thou wouldst trust in God Himself
Thy soul
Is but an emanation from the whole
Thou dost not dream what forces lie in thee,
Vast and unfathomed as the grandest sea
Thy silent mind o'er diamond caves may roll,
Go seek them—but let pilot will control
Those passions which thy favouring winds can be.

No man shall place a limit in thy strength;
Such triumphs as no mortal ever gained
May yet be thine if thou wilt but believe
In thy Creator and thyself. At length
Some feet will tread all heights now unattained—
Why not thine own? Press on! Achieve! Achieve!

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

INTRODUCTORY

Twenty-four Lessons in Elocution dealt mainly with basic rules for expressive speech. In the present volume attempts are made to guide students in the application of these rules to a more extended range of recitals and readings than was advisable in an elementary treatment of elocution.

The term "Dramatic Interpretation" is admittedly a variant upon the word elocution, but it conveniently describes what, by a natural process, takes place when the printed message of an author is recast through the medium of speech, more especially when the speaking is from memory. No two people can recite the same passage exactly alike. Each rendering must, to a greater or lesser degree, result in a blending of the personality of the reciter with that of the author. The effect of this blending is, roughly speaking, what is meant by Interpretation as here used.

The method followed throughout the greater part of this book is the submitting of a series of varied compositions of proved suitability to a careful analysis, with the object of their expressive and effective delivery.

My intention is to provide the basis of an informing method which will enable sincere students of dramatic art eventually to achieve independent and individual work.

It is assumed that those using this book have already mastered the content of the instructions given in *Twenty-four Lessons in Elocution*. No one ought to attempt public performance of any of the selections given herein who has no elementary training.

I am convinced that the study of elocution, and what is here called Dramatic Interpretation, has a much wider

range of usefulness than is generally realized. The detailed analyses of character as delineated by writers of genius increase our knowledge of human motives and tendencies. Moreover, provided studies are continued long enough, the direction of our observation ceases to be concentrical (or subjective) and becomes eccentric (or expansive). To be more specific, when you have carefully analysed characters and incidents as perceived through the eyes of Browning, Shelley, Newbolt, or Drinkwater, and then, in more homely aspects, have seen life as Jerome or Pett Ridge saw it, or have visioned the past through the imagination of Mary Webb, surely you will find your own observation of people and events becoming more acute, accurate, and, better yet, more alive with sympathy.

Intelligent work in the realm we are here considering has considerable ethical and moral value. Few wiser or truer things have ever been recorded than the saying ascribed to Madame de Stael: "Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner." If, then, to know all is to pardon all, the more thoroughly we study the characters and foibles of men and women, the nearer to truth will be our dramatic interpretations.

One objection to the interpretations offered in this book will be that if closely followed they will tend to standardize the way of their performance.

In thirty years' teaching it has been made plain to me that while many people can be taught to recite a poem or personify a character, few seem willing or able to make an independent and thorough analysis of such subject-matter on their own responsibility. This does not apply only to reciters. The same thing may be observed in the acting profession. The good average actor is one who can accurately reproduce what he is taught or shown. The exceptional actor is one who can externalize a conception of a character from his own observation and

experience, and then, having mastered the technique of acting, is able to combine effectively the results of both.

It is earnestly desired that these interpretations will be regarded by all into whose hands they come, as incentives to individual thought and study. It may be stated generally that there is always some advantage to be gained by submitting our own conceptions to the workings of another mind. Even in ordinary worries we all know how "talking the matter over" will often clarify and sometimes completely change a point of view.

Hence the ideal use to make of this book will be as follows. Having chosen the piece for study, read only the subject-matter, which, in the majority of instances, will be found in full along with each interpretation. Learn your selected piece by heart, or at least make yourself thoroughly familiar with it; make notes of all individual ideas you have upon the character or incident. Then, and *only then*, go through my notes and comments. Remember, this advice is only for students of the highest order! All others will take the line of least resistance and see first what has been set down. They will get a certain amount of good that way, but whoever would make his rendering well-knit and deep-founded will first think his own way out. It will not matter at all if that way leads to a different conception from mine. It will be worth more because it has been arrived at through mental fight.

J B

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It needs but one glance at the contents page to make clear the fact that this book could never have come into being but for the use made of the works of a number of great and distinguished writers. A considerable portion of copyright matter is included. This has only been made possible by the graciousness of authors, authors' executors, and publishers, and I beg to record my gratitude to them. In particular, acknowledgments and thanks are hereby tendered to Sir Henry Newbolt for "*He Fell Among Thieves*," reprinted from *Poems New and Old*, published by John Murray, to the same publishers for "*Fra Lippo Lippi*," as appearing in their eight-volume edition of Robert Browning's works; Mr John Drinkwater and Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd, for "*The Crowning of Dreaming John*," Messrs Macmillan & Co, Ltd, for the passage from *The Modern Reader's Bible*, "*The Servant of Jehovah Exalted*," Messrs Hutchinson & Co, Ltd, and the executors of Jerome K. Jerome for the selection from *Paul Kever*; Messrs John Long, Ltd, for selections from *Thanks to Sanderson* by W. Pett Ridge; Messrs Jonathan Cape, Ltd, for selection from *Precious Bane* by Mary Webb; Messrs Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd, and Mr Frederick Watson for selection from *Young Barbarians* by Ian Maclaren, Sir Arthur W. Pinero and Messrs. William Heinemann, Ltd, for part of the Second Act of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*; Messrs John Lane, The Bodley Head Limited, for part of the last act of Stephen Phillips' *Paolo and Francesca*, Messrs William Blackwood & Sons, Ltd, and Mrs Carrington Ouvry for *Stradivarius* by George Eliot.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY	PAGE vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	x

POEMS

FRA LIPPO LIPPI	i
(ROBERT BROWNING)	
MAUD MULLER	20
(JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER)	
TO A SKYLARK .	31
(PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY)	
HE FELL AMONG THIEVES	44
(SIR HENRY NEWBOLT)	
THE CROWNING OF DREAMING JOHN	54
(JOHN DRINKWATER)	
GOLDENHAIR AND CURLEYHEAD	63
(AUTHOR UNKNOWN)	

THE USE OF DRAMATIC EXPRESSION IN READING THE BIBLE

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH EXALTED	77
(ISAIAH)	
THE PRODIGAL SON	86
(SAINT LUKE)	
THE MAN THAT WAS BORN BLIND	93
(SAINT JOHN)	
THE HYMN TO CHARITY	103
(SAINT PAUL)	

SKETCHES AND STORIES

A SELECTION FROM JEROME K. JEROME'S "PAUL KELVER"	117
SOME NOTES ON THE WORK OF W. PETT RIDGE WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS NOVEL "THANKS TO SANDER- SON"	127

	PAGE
THE GENIUS OF MARY WEBB, WITH AN EXTRACT, "THE BAITING," FROM "PRECIOUS BANE" .	135
A LITTLE TALK ABOUT IAN MACLAREN, WITH AN EXTRACT, "BAMBOOZLING A BAILIE," FROM HIS "YOUNG BARBARIANS"	142

DRAMA

AN EPISODE FROM "THE SECOND MRS TANQUERAY" (SIR ARTHUR PINERO)	153
THE CLOSING SCENE FROM "PAOLO AND FRANCESCA" (STEPHEN PHILLIPS)	164

ORIGINAL STUDIES OF CHARACTER

HE WANTED TO BE AN ACTOR (JAMES BERNARD)	173
THE QUACK (JAMES BERNARD)	182

POEM

STRADIVARIUS (GEORGE ELIOT)	191
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DRAMATIC RECITALS

AND HOW TO DELIVER THEM

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

ROBERT BROWNING

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face
Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,
5 And here you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
The Carmine's my cloister. hunt it up.

Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll take
Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,
10 And please to know me likewise Who am I?
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
Three streets off—he's a certain . . . how d'ye call?
Master — a . . . Cosimo of the Medici
I'the house that caps the corner Boh! you were best!
15 Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged,
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves
Pick up a manner nor discredit you.
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets
20 And count fair prize what comes into their net?
He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends
Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
25 Of the munificent House that harbours me
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!)
And all's come square again. I'd like his face—

- His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
 With the pike and lantern,—for the slave that holds
 30 John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
 With one hand ("Look you, now," as who would say)
 And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped !
 It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
 A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!
 35 Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so
 What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
 You know them and they take you ? like enough !
 I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—
 'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first
 40 Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.

- Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up
 bands
 To roam the town and sing out carnival,
 And I've been three weeks shut within my mew,
 A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
 45 And saints again I could not paint all night—
 Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air
 There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
 A sweep of lute-strings, laughs and whiffs of song—
Flower o' the broom,
 50 *Take away love, and our earth is a tomb !*
Flower o' the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good in life since ?
Flower o' the thyme—and so on Round they went
 Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter
 55 Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight—three
 slim shapes,
 And a face that looked up . zooks, sir, flesh and
 blood,
 That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it went,
 Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
 All the bed furniture—a dozen knots,
 60 There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
 Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so
 dropped,

And after them I came up with the fun
Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well met,—

Flower o' the rose

65 *If I've been merry, what matter who knows?*

And so as I was stealing back again
67 To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
70 With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,
You snap me of a sudden Ah, I see!
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head—
Mine's shaved—a monk, you say—the sting's in that!
If Master Cosimo announced himself,
75 Mum's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now!
I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street
I starved there, God knows how, a year or two
80 On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and shucks,
Refuse and rubbish One fine frosty day,
My stomach being empty as your hat,
The wind doubled me up and down I went
Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand,
85 (Its fellow was a stinger as I knew)
And so along the wall, over the bridge,
By the straight cut to the convent Six words there,
While I stood munching my first bread that month
"So, boy, you're munded," quoth the good fat father
90 Wiping his own mouth, 'twas refection-time,—
"To quit this very miserable world?
Will you renounce" the mouthful of bread?
thought I;
By no means! Brief, they make a monk of me!
I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
95 Palace, farm, villa, shop and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici
Have given their hearts to—all at eight years old
Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,

'Twas not for nothing—the good bellyful,
 100 The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
 And day-long blessed idleness beside!
 “Let’s see what the urchin’s fit for”—that came next.
 Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
 Such a to-do! They tried me with their books
 105 Lord, they’d have taught me Latin in pure waste!
Flower o’ the clove,
All the Latin I construe is, “amo” I love!
 But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
 Eight years together, as my fortune was,
 110 Watching folk’s faces

Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
 He learns the look of things, and none the less
 For admonition from the hunger-pinch.
 I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
 115 Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.
 I drew men’s faces on my copy-books,
 Scrawled them within the antiphonary’s marge,
 Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
 Found nose and eyes and chin for A’s and B’s,
 120 And made a string of pictures of the world
 Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
 On the wall, the bench, the door The monks looked
 black
 “Nay,” quoth the Prior, “turn him out, d’ye say?
 In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
 125 What if at last we get our man of parts,
 We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
 And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine
 And put the front on it that ought to be!”
 And hereupon he bade me daub away
 130 Thank you! my head being crammed, the wall’s a
 blank.

- I painted all, then cried, "'Tis ask and have;
 135 Choose, for more's ready!" laid the ladder flat,
 And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall
 The monks closed in a circle and praised loud
 Till checked (taught what to see and not to see,
 Being simple bodies), "That's the very man!
 140 Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!
 That woman's like the Prior's niece who comes
 To care about his asthma; it's the life!"
 But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and fumed;
 Their betters took their turn to see and say
 145 The Prior and the learned pulled a face
 And stopped all that in no time "How? what's
 here?
 Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
 Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
 As much as pea and pea! it's devil's game!
 150 Your business is not to catch men with show,
 With homage to the perishable clay,
 But lift them over it, ignore it all,
 Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh
 Your business is to paint the souls of men—
 155 Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke—. no, it's not .
 It's vapour done up like a new-born babe—
 (In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
 It's . well, what matters talking, it's the soul!
 Give us no more of body than shows soul!
 160 Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!
 Rub all out, try at it a second time"
- "Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my life, in short,
 And so the thing has gone on ever since
 I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken bounds—
 165 You should not take a fellow eight years old
 And make him swear never to kiss the girls.

I'm my own master, paint now as I please—
 Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!

- Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front—
 170 Those great rings serve more purposes than just
 To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
 And yet the old schooling sticks—the old grave eyes
 Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
 The heads shake still—"It's Art's decline, my son!"
 175 You're not of the true painters, great and old;
 Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find,
 Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer,
 Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the thurd!"
Flower o' the pine
 180 *You keep your mistr manners, and I'll stick to mine!*
 I'm not the thurd, then bless us, they must know!
 Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,
 They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,
 Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
 185 To please them—sometimes do and sometimes
 don't,
 For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come
 A turn—some warm eve finds me at my saints—
 A laugh, a cry, the business of the world—
Flower o' the peach,
 190 *Death for us all, and his own life for each!*
 And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs o'er,
 The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,
 And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
 And play the fooleries you catch me at,
 195 In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass
 After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,
 Although the miller does not preach to him
 The only good of grass is to make chaff

- For me, I think I speak as I was taught;
 200 I always see the garden and God there
 A-making man's wife—and my lesson learned,
 The value and significance of flesh,
 I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards

- You speak no Latin more than I, belike,
205 However, you're my man, you've seen the world
—The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colours, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises—and God made it all!
—For what? Do you feel thankful, ay or no,
210 For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
These are frame to? What's it all about?
To be pass'd o'er, despised? or dwelt upon,
215 Wondered at? Oh, this last—of course!—you say
But why not do as well as say,—paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works—paint anyone, and count it crime
To let a truth slip Don't object, "His works
220 Are here already—nature is complete,
Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)
There's no advantage! You must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark, we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have
passed
225 Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see,
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out Have you noticed, now,
230 Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! How much
more,
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,
235 It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank—it means intensely, and means good,
To find its meaning is my meat and drink
"Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
240 Strikes in the Prior "when your meaning's plain

It does not say to folk—remember matins—
Or, munda you fast next Friday!” Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what’s best,
245 A bell to chime the hour with, does as well

. . .

Hang the fools!

That is—you’ll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, Got wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
250 The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don’t misreport me, now!
It’s natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself

. . .

Your hand sir, and good-bye no lights, no lights!
255 The street’s hushed, and I know my own way back,
Don’t fear me! There’s the grey beginning Zooks!

COMMENTS ON THE SPOKEN DELIVERY OF "FRA LIPPO LIPPI"

If one or two of the pieces presented in this book are considered too familiar to be worth while studying afresh this is certainly not one of them "Fra Lippo Lippi" is never likely to be popular to the degree that, say, Whittier's "Maud Muller" is popular Robert Browning has given us in this poem a great and dramatic study of a unique character, and a true and highly picturesque representation of a significant period in the history and development of painting But, more, "Fra Lippi" is of vital interest to all artists whether they work in pigments or through music or the spoken word. His story tells of the expression of the artistic impulse, the struggle of an erring but lovable man to give the world his fine, beautiful, fresh ideas in painting

The best of all impulses towards studying and learning a poem is one's individual enjoyment; that is to say, loving it oneself and wanting to share the good thing with others. The reading of "Fra Lippo Lippi" in a precious sixpenny selection, issued by Cassells, more than thirty years ago, was an epoch for me It meant a thrilling awakening to the fascination of the world of art in the glory of the Renaissance.

You will all do yourselves much good by making a thorough study of this poem Even if you only find as many willing listeners as I have done, your labour will be profitable. But it is likely enough that you will exceed my number because, for one thing, your task in acquiring an understanding and appreciation will certainly be rather lighter than was mine Even if it should happen that, having mastered the poem, you never recite it or even share the telling of the story with another—though,

truly, that is difficult to imagine—your whole mental horizon will have been enlarged, and (note this, all students of acting or reciting¹) you are bound to get out of this something which you can incorporate into other selections with which you may have more popular success.

Here at least you have one immediate advantage over my introduction to Fra Lippo Lippi. The poem is here in nobly clear type and generous spacing which are joys to the eye. These matters constitute a real service to the uninterrupted mental reception of the work.

First take advantage of the good printing and study the text, letting the untrammelled glory exert its influence upon your mind and heart. This is of much greater importance than anything I can write by way of comment. The little biographical notes which are included may help to give your minds the necessary wings. But do not bother about my notes and suggestions for reciting until you have made your own personal acquaintance with the merry, plausible genius who is the subject of the poem.

All that I can say has come through pondering on Browning's words, and observing life through my own experiences. I must not omit to remind you of Fra Lippi's pictures. Go to the National Gallery at the first opportunity. I have stood for several happy hours before the few examples of his art which are there. But if you cannot get to see any of the actual pictures, Messrs. T. C. & E. C. Jack published some years ago in their *Masterpieces in Colour* series, a book of fine value by P. G. Konody, giving, in addition to a scholarly study of Fra Lippi's life and art, remarkably rich reproductions of a number of the pictures.

Fra Lippo Lippi was the son of a butcher in Florence, 1412 was the year of his birth and he died in 1469. Nearly all we need to be told apart from these details we can gather as we read the poem. But one great

reason why you should study Fra Lippi's pictures for yourselves is that you may see how truly Browning has interpreted the artist's determination to paint from the life he knew. You do not need to be a trained art critic (if there really are such, the late Lord Oxford expressed doubts upon this point in one of his essays) to see that Fra Lippo Lippi's faces were copied from actual living people. His Babes are just jolly little kiddies, like those he had played with in the gutters and lanes of Florence. His Madonnas are comely women of the peasant class. And the recognition of these things will heighten your appreciation when we come to that part of the poem which treats of his being told to paint only the soul, a passage which is as full of unconscious humour as can be. Do take particular notice of the old prior's attempts to define the indefinable.

Let us assume, then, that you have now read the work through and are under the spell of the merry, though very reprehensible friar. We will go along through Browning's great monologue together and I will tell you what I have found. Probably as you read you were struck with the vigorous, direct, frank style of the friar's speech. It is so obviously the bubbling up and over of an alert, witty mind. Did you notice, also, the constant references to his craft? "A bit of chalk, a wood-coal or the like?" None but a painter would talk as he does about drawing, and about lines, shapes, colours, "my covered bit of cloister-wall." Once again, you will have noticed the variation of moods he exhibits, he is very, as we say, temperamental; one minute gaily singing, the next, reflective or almost regretful, no mood lasts long, but the love of his art dominates all.

For convenience I have numbered the lines by fives. But I must remind you that I have omitted some 100 lines from the full version. While it is almost a sacrilege to have done this, the 250 or so lines here given will

occupy as long a time as any but a very learned audience will enjoy at one sitting. Should you have the good fortune to be invited to render the poem for a company who have made a definite study of Browning, then you had better insert the lines here omitted.

Some day a bold, brave producer will give this what it deserves, a proper stage setting. I urge all who possibly can do so either to see or get a copy of Holiday's picture *Dante and Beatrice*. The original is in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. But there are many good reproductions available. The picture, so far as the building and scenery are concerned, would suggest an almost perfect setting for the enactment of the story, although the period of Dante was almost two hundred years earlier.

The dim, luminous light of a late Italian spring night is reflected in the waters of the Arno as it flows under the bridge past Florence. As the curtain rises, sounds of merry revellers, men and women, are heard fading away, and then there floats on the air the melody of one of the *stornelli* or flower songs of the peasants—

“Flower o’ the broom, flower o’ the broom,
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!
Flower of the quince, flower of the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?”

Then a burst of laughter. a pause. A monk, cowl over head, comes hurrying across the stage, at the same moment, from the opposite side, enter a party of watchmen under charge of an officer. the monk scuttles down an alley. The watchmen move lumberingly along, sending the rays of their lanterns into each doorway and entry. Suddenly, a shout of ribald laughter rings out. They have spied the would-be-hidden friar. They drag him forth. He is both angry and somewhat distressed, as his voice and manner indicate. The watchmen are rough, uncouth fellows, but the officer is obviously an

educated man. He looks on at the scuffle, partly amused and interested in the unusual capture. "Well," we imagine him saying, "and who are *you*, and what are you doing out so late?"

It is true that after the opening, lively action, the rest of the incident is a monologue, but although the officer has nothing given him to say, he has to express many feelings and emotions, and it would take a clever actor to play this part well. But to enact Fra Lippo Lippi, so that a theatre audience would be held the whole time, would need an actor of unusual and brilliant powers. The only living actor I can think of who would successfully run the whole gamut of emotions required is Robert Farquharson, who gave us that amazing enactment of Paul I, in *Such Men are Dangerous* by Alfred Neuman, adapted by Ashley Dukes.

Lines 1 to 20. Shame, anger, indignation are to be revealed by the speaker; these expressions soon merge into a half-humorous scorn. The first line may be said either as if he thought he would be allowed to pass on his way, implying that he had been on some errand of mercy, or, alternatively, in a strident manner, as, "That's who I am. Now, what have you got to say about it?" The second line, quite angrily; for the third line, no attempt at subterfuge—rather sneeringly, he is smarting from the pain of being gripped at the throat by one of the watchmen; the others thrust their torches near his face. At the mention of his cloister, and also because his speech reveals him to be no ordinary night-prowler, the officer in charge has told the men to loose him. We can plainly see the monk pulling away the rough hand that has gripped his throat. The introduction of "sir" (line 11) shows that he is addressing the officer in making his explanation. Then at line 14, with the exclamation of "Boh!" he turns for a moment to his late assailant, with the caustic reference to "the day you're hanged,"

obviously still feeling his bruised neck and throat. At line 17 he turns again to the officer and protests at such unmannerly treatment being given a respectable citizen

Line 21 By this time he has quite recovered his equanimity, and here is the first of the many indications of the artist's preoccupation with form and colour, his quick and accurate observation. A sharp change of tone must be used as, breaking off his concern for himself, he notes the expression and shape of the face that would serve as a model for Judas

Line 22 Again a change of tone, a warm friendly one to the officer whom he perceives to be something of a kindred spirit. He wants to talk to him without reserve. Make the action of feeling in a pocket and producing a coin which he probably hands to his new friend to give to one of the "knaves"

Line 26 is addressed in a hearty, jovial voice to them. Now we see the watchmen dismissed for a spell, making for the tavern close at hand. The monk is as vivid with his verbal pictures as with his brush or pencil and his fingers are twitching to be at his sketching. Evidently, the officer is intrigued by the gay, volatile friar; he has heard of his work and is delighted to be thus acquainted. The pursuit of art was honoured in that age. Men who could paint well did not have to starve for lack of patrons. Art and the love of art flourished then. [Read Clifford Bax's *Leonardo da Vinci* (Peter Davies, Ltd.) for confirmation of this. Also, for an entrancing picture of Florence as it was about fifty years later, *The Forerunner*, a novel by Merejkowski (Constable)]

Lines 35 to 40. In the manner of one arriving at a friendly understanding with a new acquaintance, as when two travellers who have been thrown together find points of common interest.

Lines 41, 42 reveal the eternal awakening of the heart

of man to the joy of the year's new birth How unlike the words are as indicative of what is assumed to be the monkish view of life! How intensely human!

Lines 43 to middle of 45 Self-pitifully. His patron, Cosimo di Medici, knowing him well, had locked him up in his room, or probably, Fra Lippi was only allowed out from the convent on the understanding that he was kept safely within bounds

Line 45 You may stress "all" or "night," either meaning that he could not be expected to paint the whole night or that he had been unable to paint at all

Line 46 "Ouf!" An expression of boredom Then right on to line 71 in fairly rapid narrative, which must be given with great animation.

As to the little snatches of song, the stornelli, if you are able to sing, I suggest taking pains to find suitable melodies If you can make your own, all the better.

Notice the quickly alternating moods. Immediately following his breaking into song comes the half-complaining tone which begins at line 66.

Line 71 "Ah, I see!" The officer is evidently a serious-minded man and manifests, by look and head-shaking, his disapproval of the friar's behaviour This brings forth the gem of biography which follows

Lines 77 to 85 make us see, with intimate detail, Fra Lippo Lippi's infancy and early boyhood in the streets—a superb word picture the little, merry-eyed orphan playing in the gutter; playing, and grubbing for food as well, glad of anything even to chew, whether edible or not; yet all the time registering unconsciously in his marvellous little brain every incident, fair or foul, every outline of face or body, every colour and shade; all to be used very soon in the "prompt disembodying" on the cloister wall.

Try to *tell* all this as if you were addressing one person (and here comes in the need of mastery of *Twenty-four*

Lessons in Elocution) Old Aunt Lapaccia has only two lines but she lives and moves before us. We feel vividly acquainted with the sturdy, matter-of-fact woman. Pages of analysis and characterization could not do more for us.

Line 85 is enough to make many of us wriggle in our seats. If you have no personal recollections to help you in saying that line, borrow from someone who has.

Lines 86, 87. Only three phrases and yet we could find our own way to the convent after reading them.

The memorable interview at the convent gate requires careful management of voice and expression of face; it is all so brief, so vivid to the mind of the attentive silent reader. But don't forget that the act of speech is a recasting of silent perception into audible perception. I consider this passage from "six words there" to "by no means!" a test for the reciter and actor. You have to make the audience *see* the incident: the fat old monk who has had to answer the gate-bell during his meal-time, wiping his mouth (probably without a serviette!), and yet eager enough to get hold of this bright, clever-looking youngster. We can guess that Aunt Lapaccia knew enough to impress Lippo's gifts and graces upon the old man at the gate. Promising young boys in whom either incipient signs of religion or art were discernible were in those days welcomed by the heads of religious houses. One must assume that it was the indications of cleverness rather than love of religious mediation that got little Lippo admitted into the Carmelite brotherhood.

Then think of the hungry little boy gulping down nice white bread which has been given him. Some formal words he is required to repeat, to the effect that he will henceforward play no more among his young companions of the gutter and will abide by the convent's rule. See also lines 165, 166. He does not care about anything but the comfort to his little belly from the food he is eating, but he catches the phrase, "Will you renounce?" He

thinks, "Not this good bread, at any rate I'll do anything you like, promise anything you ask, if I can get food like this every day "

That is a long comment on a short passage, but try now to convey something of it all It is vital to the story that those who hear the recital from you know just how Lippo came to be a monk at all And this incident gives the key to his temperament "Renounce?" says Lippo, "anything you like, except what I want at the particular moment " Here it was bread, later on it was the pleasure of illicit amours

Line 93 beginning at "Brief, they make a monk of me" to line 97 gives his own humorously satirical view of the imposing of vows upon a boy of eight Say the words with an air of suggesting that "palace, farm, villa," and the rest were of smallest possible consequence to him, and then with mock seriousness, "*all at eight years old* "

From this point onward until line 145 the changes of tone and manner are clearly indicated By now you will have caught the spirit of the fascinating friar. The details which Browning gives are all selected with such masterly power that the very atmosphere of that monastery seems to be exhaled. the roguish boy drawing in his copy-books instead of learning his lessons; disfiguring, as it seemed, the music pages; then, the prior obtains for him liberty to express his artist fancies; "And hereupon he bade me daub away," which is the best way ever for any artist to learn his craft One learns by doing What a glorious sight that wall must have been after Lippo's first "prompt disemburdening!" Do you catch the murmur of the simple brethren as they close round to see the boy's sketches? You may learn from these and the next few lines more truth about the religious attitude to art than a dozen volumes could supply

Lines 145 to 161. Study hard and make a good attempt at personifying the old prior, with his delicious

exhibition of being shocked at the boy's frank drawings, and, more particularly, the matchless futility of his attempts to define the soul

Line 162 At "Rub all out," he begins again his narrative, or rather his reflections, upon his life at the monastery

Lines 165, 166 The whole gist of the matter is in these two frank lines. For all their bold frivolity they are so entirely true. How could a child of eight possibly know its own mind and tendencies?

Lines 172 to 178 See how his moods alternate from impish gaiety to seriousness. Another living picture of the monastic life. The eager, restless youth at his canvas, warm blood pulsing in his veins, his nerves all a'tangle, communicating something of the human fire within him to his picture. That Baby Saviour! He must give a gleam of the merriment he has observed in some jolly infant he remembered gambolling at an alley's end. That Mother! He must make her not an ethereal but a human mother. And "the old grave eyes" of the sad prior are "peeping o'er his shoulder." Knowing life and afraid of it; viewing the world as a blot. And for that least monk-like of monks, the all unequal fight going on within, the bursting of the prison bars happening time after time, until in the end it seems that in order to prevent further scandals his early vows had to be annulled.

Line 179 You notice that the merry fellow never stavs long over any problem of ethics or morals. His quick and sensitive mind gets brilliant flashes of all the implications of his actions, and he deals with any of these as they come up for notice with a sure touch, but soon he is off again.

How characteristic of all this is the whiff of song which follows here!

The remainder is for the greater part in the same style; bits of narrative alternating with half humorous,

half angry reflections. If you have followed my suggestion and comments thus far it will be better for you to give your individual interpretation of the remainder. But a word or two about the closing incident, which begins at "Hang the fools!" This is his most vehement expression, and the previous lines excuse the heat of the phrase. I think it better, with a recital, to omit the 40-odd lines describing his painting the great picture of the *Coronation of the Virgin*.

The end is on an almost pathetic note, he seems to wish to retain his new friend's sympathy. The two lines 252-3,

"It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself"

completely sum up the whole episode.

And then the final three lines, the farewell, with its swift dramatic phrases. "No lights, no lights," he says, the officer has probably suggested calling the watchmen back to guide him on his way, but Fra Lippi does not want *them* again. With a wave of the hand and a half merry, half sad smile, he goes away in the grey dawn.

Sometimes I have finished by repeating one of the snatches of song. Do this if you think fit. I am not sure, myself, whether it is good to do so or not. If done it should be only very faint.

Nothing, outside what Browning has given, ever so made clear to me the essential tragedy of Fra Lippo Lippi as a picture of him by Henry Osipov. This modern artist shows the painter-monk at work on a picture in a church. An uncanny expression of disillusionment is in his face.

MAUD MULLER

By JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

- 1 { Maud Muller, on a summer's day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay
2 { Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
Of simple beauty and rustic health
3 { Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
The mock-bird echoed from his tree.
- 4 { But when she glanced to the far-off town,
White from its hill-slope looking down,
5 { The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast—
6 { A wish, that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known
- 7 { The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane
8 { He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,
9 { And ask a draught from the spring that flowed
Through the meadow across the road
- 10 { She stooped where the cool spring bubbled up,
And filled for him her small tin cup,
11 { And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.
- 12 { "Thanks!" said the Judge, "a sweeter draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed"
13 { He spoke of the grass and flowers and trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming bees,
14 { Then talked of the haying, and wondered whether
The cloud in the west would bring foul weather

- 15 { And Maud forgot her briar-torn gown,
And her graceful ankles bare and brown ;
- 16 { And listened, while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes
- 17 { At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away
- 18 { Maud Muller looked and sighed · “ Ah me !
That I the Judge’s bride might be !
- 19 { He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.
- 20 { “ My father should wear a broadcloth coat ;
My brother should sail a painted boat
- 21 { “ I’d dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day.
- 22 { “ And I’d feed the hungry and clothe the poor,
And all should bless me who left our door ”
- 23 { The Judge looked back as he climbed the hill,
And saw Maud Muller standing still
- 24 { “ A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne’er hath it been my lot to meet.
- 25 { “ And her modest answer and graceful air
Show her wise and good as she is fair
- 26 { “ Would she were mine, and I to-day,
Like her, a harvester of hay
- 27 { “ No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,
And weary lawyers with endless tongues,
- 28 { “ But low of cattle and song of birds,
And health and quiet and loving words ”
- 29 { But he thought of his sisters, proud and cold,
And his mother vain of her rank and gold
- 30 { So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone.

- 31 { But the lawyers smiled that afternoon,
When he hummed in court an old love-tune,
32 { And the young girl mused beside the well,
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell
- 33 { He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power
34 { Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow,
He watched a picture come and go
35 { And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes
Looked out in their innocent surprise
36 { Oft, when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead;
37 { And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms,
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms
38 { And the proud man sighed, with a secret pain,
"Ah, that I were free again!
39 { "Free as when I rode that day,
Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay."
- 40 { She wedded a man unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door
41 { But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain,
Left their traces on heart and brain.
- 42 { And oft, when the summer sun shone hot
On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,
43 { And she heard the little spring brook fall,
Over the roadside, through the wall,
44 { In the shade of the apple-tree again
She saw a rider draw his rein
45 { And, gazing down with a timid grace,
She felt his pleased eyes read her face.

- 46 { Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls,
47 { The weary wheel to a spinnet turned,
The tallow candle an astral burned,
48 { And for him who sat by the chimney lug,
Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,
49 { A manly form by her side she saw,
And joy was duty, and love was law.
50 { Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, "It might have been "
- 51 { Alas, for maiden, alas for Judge,
For such repiner and household drudge !
52 { God pity them both ! and pity us all,
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall
53 { For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these "It might have been !"
- 54 { Ah, well ! for us all some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes ;
55 { And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away !

COMMENTS ON "MAUD MULLER"

THIS poem has endured and will endure because it sets forth in clear terms the most frequent source of romantic and idealistic love. It is the story of a chance meeting by a man and a woman of widely differing stations at a time when each is free to love the other, free, that is to say, legally, but impeded by social barriers. They meet but once and only for a few minutes; no word of love is actually spoken. Then the man goes his way and the woman remains where she is. But their souls have touched and each remains for the other an imperishable memory and an untarnished ideal.

Two sources of the loveliness of the story are, first, that no tragedy arose out of the meeting, and each life was ennobled in some measure because of it. Secondly, the dream, for it was only a dream for each, was never shattered. It remained always beautiful. Bret Harte in his cruelly witty parody of Maud Muller shows how easily it might have been a tragedy had the dream become an actuality. We can afford to laugh at, and with Bret Harte because in spite of "Mrs. Judge Jenkins," the story of Maud Muller remains as Whittier left it.

Let us analyse it together. Observe how it falls easily into a series of distinct pictures.

Verses 1 to 3. A view of country life, bright with sunshine, true and happy. Three aspects: landscape, human life, and bird-life, all in harmony. Speak the lines in full, strong tones, infusing into them the warmth of a happy, healthy being.

Verses 4 to 6. Now the minor key is touched. The first thought as you gazed upon that scene of calm, innocent joy might well have been—

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Her sober wishes never learned to stray."

But this sweet maid of the farm is not so calmly content. A sad lilt goes through the lines Speak the words with the utmost care of the tone-colours "The sweet song died" should be half tearfully said "Longing" and "better" need warm-toned emphasis

Verses 7 to 9. How well the words lend themselves to a slight echo of what they describe The seventh verse can be made to suggest the ambling, leisured pace of the horse

Verses 8 and 9 allow of the combination of action and speech, drawing the bridle, and the courtly sweep of the hat in greeting, meanwhile, the rich, manly tones of the judge can be conveyed by the tone-colour pervading the words from "to greet the maid "

Verses 10 and 11 give indication of the tremulous joy at the sudden materialization of her undefined dreams These two verses need the maximum of artistic expression and delicate miming. Try it as follows, letting the action or miming precede the words so far as possible Register Maud's look of "innocent surprise" at the Judge's request

"She stooped where the clear spring bubbled up
And filled for him her small tin cup "

After saying "she" make the action which the remainder of the line describes and then speak the rest of the line Then mime (or act) the details of rising and lifting the cup with both hands to the man on horseback, giving a shy but radiant smile as she meets the judge's interested gaze. Supposing the horseman to be on her left, that arm remains up a second or two longer than the other, so as to allow time for the cup to be safely handed; meanwhile the right arm sinks and the head declines as if she is overcome with modest shame

Maud's dream, as described in verses 4 to 6, was quite vague; she was not concerned with details, but we may perceive the poet's true insight into a woman's

character Contact with the judge, his obvious friendliness, and swiftly awakened admiration, make Maud at once conscious of what she deemed the imperfections of her attire Doubtless if she had expected the judge would be passing and deigning to speak to her Maud would have had on her best frock and have covered her lovely feet And by the same tokens she would have marred the exquisite vision which her admirer was able to retain

Verses 12 to 16 describe the supreme moment of her life. Brief as the event was in actual time measurement (at most it could hardly exceed ten, or, say, fifteen minutes), yet it comprised the whole of this lovely creature's romance, the only glimpse she ever got of anything outside her destined way of life What a little it seems for two people to build a life-long experience upon!

For vocal rendering rich, vibrant tones for verse 12 where the actual speech is given Then the next two verses with a similar tone, reminiscent of the judge's voice In uttering verse 15 think of the exquisite fluttering of this peasant girl's heart at being spoken to by a gentleman as to a lady, and try to translate into your voice as much as you can imagine of such an experience. The stresses are many and beyond the written word, but note particularly "forgot" and "pleased surprise"

Verse 17 Nothing in the least remarkable in the words, yet they are perfectly descriptive of what happens thousands of times every day in the world A sudden, unexpected meeting—two souls drawn together by instinctive sympathy Swiftly as the clouds flit across the sky, the golden moment is at an end We meet, we linger, the gates of paradise seem about to open; we pass on; but life is never the same again A precious light forever illumines the memory

Do not omit to notice the significance of verse 17. His good breeding is shown in the fact that having exhausted all the obvious topics he did not seek to press his advantage or embarrass her. Nothing more than the commonplaces of conversation, and yet each soul was flowing out to the other.

Verses 18 to 22. These five verses seem to me a fine illustration of the truthfulness and artistic restraint of Whittier. The fact that he does not sentimentalize about Maud is one reason for the poem's enduring strength. It will not lessen your admiration of Maud if you smile at her practical mind. She stands revealed as thinking just the thoughts her station and upbringing might be expected to breed in her. She does not utter one thought which is above her natural range. She loved the judge, but her thoughts naturally described the immediate tangible things she could perceive and understand. Of the ten pictures she conjures up, four concern clothes, two refer to toys, one to food, one to drink, only two to herself, first, as the object of her lover's delight and, lastly, as the lady bountiful of the village. Laugh if you choose, as you reflect that Maud's ideas are all about herself and her family; laugh, also, if you will, at her simplicity in thinking that the judge will be agreeable to all these charges upon his purse. Any amusement you may gain from these reflections will make you perceive more truly just what Whittier meant you to see, that Maud is a real flesh-and-blood girl and no creature of idle dreams. Say every line, every word of her speech or soliloquy in trance-like manner. Prosaic as the details are, they are heavenly to her, they describe the best heaven she can imagine (Incidentally, it is quite as near to heaven as the majority of mankind dream about!)

True, her ideas are entirely subjective; there is no hint that she has any perception that the judge's mind and ideas would be different from her own. She believes,

with the untempered joy of a fresh, pure young soul, that Love would meet all demands and solve all problems. All who attempt to interpret this poem may remind themselves once more that the reason it is cherished and preserved is not just because it is a "nice piece for a recitation." It bears upon every line the impress of truth to life and common experience

From verses 23 to 39 we have the judge's impressions, reflections, and procedure. They are just as true and natural to his mind and upbringing as Maud's are to her own. His conception of country life is every bit as idealistic as hers is of the judge's manner of spending his days. Yet he has withal a truer and more experienced view. It is not the thought of the possible dullness and monotony of country life that deters him. But social and family prejudices are not negligible; he has duties to his present rank and position which he cannot altogether disdain.

Verse 23. The very simplicity of the words is a call upon the reciter to inflect and colour the tones with care. Do not run away with the idea that it is *easy* to speak with perfect naturalness. That is just the hardest thing of all. These words can be said as a silly jingle, or, as they should be, with quiet restrained dignity and understanding sympathy. They give an entirely adequate picture of the scene and incident. Nothing much—yet everything. The look back from the hill-top; his reflective speech, passionate and tender, before she fades out of his life, save as a memory, for ever, the girl for whom life will never be the same again.

Verses 24 to 28 must be said with increasing warmth, intensely and fairly rapidly. Don't over-particularize anything in speaking the judge's words. Practise this part first very slowly and master it so that you can say it with rushing, kindling warmth.

Verse 29. Suggests being suddenly pulled up. The douche of the cold water of stark reality.

Verse 30. The first line is just a man's sigh. The second line is just a woman's sigh. Speak them thus.

Verse 31 There is needed exquisite adjustment of tone to convey the sweet-sad fragrance of this incident. It is a real test of elocution, it brings in so many of its attributes: phrasing, inflection, emphasis. Dwell upon the picture the verse creates. the musty, frowsy courtroom; the drab, sordid-minded litigants; outside the sunshine, and some rays thereof struggling through the room; on the bench the young judge, below him lawyers. Perhaps there has arrived a moment's interval between two cases Suddenly there floats out upon the air—



The weary lawyers look up amazed, for the sound comes from the bench The judge, with a dreamy look in his eyes, is plainly away for the moment, among meadows and clover blooms No wonder the lawyers smiled and very likely they smiled good-naturedly, because nothing is truer than the saying, "All the world loves a lover."

Verse 32. The judge finds solace in his duties and the memory of his morning's innocent encounter expresses itself in the old love tune, the young girl neglects her task while musing for an hour or so.

Verse 33 Say this nonchalantly, coldly.

Verses 34 to 39 This word-picture of the man's anguished after-dream and soliloquy must be delivered something like his previous one in verses 24 to 28, but with much added poignancy

Verses 40 and 41. Notice the similarity in the mood of futility and ennui between what is expressed here and what is expressed in verse 30 Maud and the judge have each taken the obvious, planned, and destined course. There has been no adventure, only a dream

Verses 42 to 45 correspond in tone and mood to the judge's reverie, verses 34 to 39. Almost the same speed and tone-colour but with rather more intensity in the tones. The earlier passage will be the easier to speak because you have the actual words of the judge, whereas Maud's feelings are only described.

Verses 46, 47, 48. These three verses convey impressions similar to what might be received from a picture of a cottage interior by Josef Israels, placed side by side with one of William Orchardson's aristocratic domestic scenes.

Verse 47 is difficult to manage. We want to say "changed" instead of "turned" but we must not.

Verse 48 affords an opportunity of colourful acting of low life. The words allow a character portrayal of the grumbling, sottish husband who was poor Maud's fate.

Verse 49. The tones thrilling with the cherished memory of the judge.

Verse 50. Practise this with infinite pains. If you have been alert and diligently observant of all the suggestions which have preceded this you will perceive the need for delicate yet significant speaking. It is almost too fine to indicate anything by set rule or marking, but there must be something of an emphasis on "might."

Verses 51, 52, 53. Suggestions are not likely to help much here beyond mentioning the necessity of a warmly glowing crescendo. Dramatically it seems wise to end with verse 53.

The remaining two verses are just reflective and from a reciter's standpoint make an anti-climax. Say them or omit them just as you feel to be right. I prefer to omit them.

TO A SKYLARK

By PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

- Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
5 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art
Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
10 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest
In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run;
15 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun
The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight,
Like a star of Heaven
In the broad daylight
20 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,
Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
25 Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there
All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare
From one lonely cloud
30 The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is
overflowed

- What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
35 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody
Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
40 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not
Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
45 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower
Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
50 Among the flowers and grass, which screens it
from the view!
Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
55 Make faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged
thieves
Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
60 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass
Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine.
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
65 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
70 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden
want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
75 What love of thine own kind? What ignorance of
pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be.
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee.
80 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
85 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal
stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
90 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest
thought

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
95 I know not how thy joy we ever should come
near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
100 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
105 The *world* should listen then—as I am listening now

COMMENTS ON "TO A SKYLARK"

THIS is one of the imperishable treasures of the world. It will only die when language dies and memory no longer holds her seat in the mind of man. Although it has been reprinted in an incalculable number of anthologies, textbooks, and compilations of recitations, I have never before seen any attempt at analysis of the poem which might help those who attempt to speak the words. The trained and cultivated lover of the silent reading of poetry will protest against any explanation or analysis, and say that a poem, like a picture, is the artist's message; the reader must find its meaning for himself, further, if the poem is at all obscure, you must ponder upon it until the meaning and the beauty exhale themselves into your mind. Such injunctions are sound enough where the objective is your own, individual perception and enjoyment. But in vocal interpretation, or reciting, there must be very much more than an individual understanding and enjoyment. The mind of the speaker has to be flooded with a recaptured vision of the poet.

"Lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice"

says Longfellow. Yes; but there is something more in it than that. If we are real interpreters we are careful to obliterate ourselves in serving the Poet, but we must attempt to get into his mind as it is revealed in the poem. The only way I know of approximating to this is by patient, loving analysis.

As students of reciting or dramatic interpretation you will not require telling that there may be many ways of interpreting the same poem if it be a work of genius. What follows must be considered merely as the reaction of one mind to this lovely composition. And, once more,

I urge you to absorb the whole poem yourself before you read one line of my comments

There is an ordered progression revealed in "To a Skylark" It is not only a series of ecstatic outpourings expressed with absolute and perfect beauty. Although the first thirty lines are descriptive of the untrammelled joy produced in the mind of the Poet, the mind thereafter proceeds upon a quest. And though the argument makes a circle, a problem is definitely grappled with. The questions raised are all addressed to the bird, and, roughly, they are these: What are you like? What is like you? To whom and of whom do you sing? What is the burden of your song? And the final reflection is the Poet's conviction that if he could sing his songs with half the gladness and harmonious madness of the little Skylark the world would be compelled to listen to him.

It will, I think, be wisest generally to follow the line numberings rather than to specify verses.

Line 1. A hearty greeting, and to be so spoken, with a strong stress on "Hail" and a definite but moderate one on "spirit."

Line 2. Make the voice reveal unmistakably the Poet's repudiation of the songster's material nature. A warm note of protest must colour "Bird" and a similar note on "never." Take pains with the inflections. They are complex on each word, but contrasted.

Those two opening lines convey the reason for all that follows. The Poet refuses to regard the Skylark as a bird with the limitations of its own little life. He will only accept it as being conscious of all the emotional and spiritual effects it awakens in the Poet's soul. Needless to say, that as a contribution to the actual nature and life of a real skylark the poem means nothing. An ornithologist would tell us that the skylark has no more realization of the ethical value of its song than has a barn-yard rooster of its own cheerful crowing. Indeed, if it were not

so then the story of Nero and his dish of larks' hearts becomes the most appalling of all his appalling deeds

No; I think we must concede that it is the Poet who experiences in his own heart and mind all that he attributes to the bird. We can only rightly interpret this exquisite work in so far as we can share the experiences it describes. We too must hear the Skylark, and hear it as the Poet hears it, so far as our limited powers allow; we must feel as the Poet feels, suffer as he suffers. Shelley was so entirely the true Poet to whom he compares the bird, "singing songs unbidden"

Lines 3 and 4. From "That from Heaven or near it" until the end of the verse the main inflections are rising ones because no clear sense is conveyed before then.

The first syllable of "p^{ro}fuse" must be slightly stressed to make the line flow musically. You will find that if you say "p^{ro}fuse" the line will make an awkward jolt at that point.

Lines 6, 7, 8. Mark the leaping action suggested by the sequence of the words. If you watch a fire, especially one in the open air, you will see how the flames leap and spring.

Line 9. Watch your tones carefully here. The words describe the furthest limits of the flight and are connected with the idea that follows in line 10; therefore sustain the rising inflections all along until the final word, "singest". The last line of the verse (line 10) requires great delicacy of treatment. The one thought is twice expressed but so miraculously that it seems like two distinct thoughts. I advise a rather long upward slide on "ever" and the least possible pause after this, but only a fraction.

Lines 11 to 15. The whole of the verse comprised by these lines is one complete expression. Therefore, the inflection needs to be upward, right on to the close; but

line 13 ("O'er which clouds are brightening") can be made parenthetical. If you feel impelled to let the voice slide down at "float and run," you will need to give the next line in a tone which will leave no doubt in the hearers' minds that it is connected with the previous lines. It may be uttered as if the image of "an unbodied joy" had suddenly occurred to you. There is hardly anything more lovely in poetry than this line. It is indeed just as lovely as it is intangible. While it defies analysis it sets the imagination alight. Surely "joy" is an abstraction; "unbodied" seems to be redundant. That hardly matters. Think of the skylark. Sing out the line. But can you say "unbodied"? I cannot. I must say "unbodied."

Line 16. The stress must be on "even" not on "purple." I have heard it read as if the meaning were "Even the pale purple melts around thy flight."

Line 18. Keep the slide upward inclined at "Heaven" and also at "daylight," then at "unseen" make a downward slide but quickly lift it again so that the full comparison be realized, which is that long after the bird has vanished from mortal vision the song is heard. Strong emphasis on "I hear."

Lines 21 to 25. Be alert to note that only a comma separates the previous lines from what now follows. My powers of analysis fail completely here. The lines suggest a rarefied state of the mind to which great music, greatly played, lifts the soul when there is no applause to break the spell. Absorb it as far as you are able and speak it in a holy ecstasy, but with the clearest possible enunciation.

Lines 26 to 30. With these lines comes the close of what may be called the Address or Invocation. Practically all that Shelley has said thus far pertains to the Skylark and its song. Had the poem ended at this point we could still retain a miracle of expressiveness; we

should know at least how one supreme thing in Nature impressed one of the master minds.

There may be a downward inflection at "loud" because the sense of the thought is completed, but take up the word "As," which begins the next line, with a marked upward slide, and with a rich tone-colour, and then maintain the idea of Suspense until the noble climax is achieved with "Heaven is overflowed"

Lines 31 to 35 The inspired poet, having released his rapturous joy in listening to and watching the bird, lets his glowing imagination now, as is his nature, loose in a gorgeous but always clear series of symbols and comparisons, each pertaining to his conceptions of the marvellous songster. In line 31 he seems tacitly to admit that all he can assign to the bird's song is the outcome of fancy. Then immediately he compares its pearl-like notes with surely the most delicate and fragile thing in nature. the fine vapour which rises from and about the rainbow and dissolves into the tiniest diamond drops of moisture. These drops, says Shelley, are not so bright as the showers of melody which fall from the throat of the lark.

Speak line 31 without any special expression, a simple rise on "art" and then a declining note on "we know." Do not emphasize "not."

Line 32 Any one of the first four words may be stressed but the best one, to my mind, is "like" The remaining lines of the verse need to be spoken with well-sustained upward inflections. Do not allow the conclusion to be registered until the final phrase, "a rain of melody."

Lines 36 to 55 present four symbols. In the first (36 to 40) Shelley pre-figures himself and his faith in his mission as poet. Also he expresses the faith which must be the heritage of all true artists, whether they write or paint, or sing or preach, or act or recite, they all do so unbidden by aught but what another poet, Whitman, called "the potent, felt, interior command"

Speak with the utmost care, but with intensity, in the middle pitch, yet slightly deeper than a conversational tone. The first two lines of the section are really one phrase, hence make only the briefest of halts after "hidden" and a slight downward vocal movement on "thought." Take the voice upward quickly with "singing hymns unbidden," then speak the remainder of the verse fairly rapidly with warm, glowing tones; merely a tiny halt at "wrought" and another at "fears," to preserve the lilt of the music.

Lines 41 to 45 transport us into the kingdom of old romance. Memories of Keats's "Isabella," Tennyson's "Elaine," float through the mind. There are also many maidens, not high-born, confined to humble homes, workshop, or factory, who yet fulfil the essential of the experience Shelley here indicates. The picture thus conjured up is so beautiful that I can only bid you to absorb its essence and then, after much thought and practice, utter it as expressively as you can. Take care, however, not to drag the last line (the 45th). Don't sentimentalize it too much.

Lines 46 to 50. Of the four symbols (Poet, Maiden, Glow-worm, Rose) the "glow-worm golden in a dell of dew" expresses the extremest idea of spontaneous giving out. By comparison, the Rose indicates a joy-giving which is shared by many. But the little Glow-worm! Perhaps you know that those who have made minute observations say that if a glow-worm is crushed underfoot the whole of its minute energy is concentrated in making an even brighter glow as it expires.

Lines 51 to 55. Make a tiny pause at "rose," a fully sustained tone at "embowered," and a downward inflection at "leaves," because complete sense has been reached. What follows, though not detachable from the rest, creates a new concept. The next lines require so many inflections and such complex ones that I fear to

attempt any marking lest I "darken counsel" But see to it that the connection between the "warm winds" and "heavy-winged thieves" is maintained Make it clear that "warm winds" *are* "those heavy-winged thieves"

For each of the four symbols here dealt with there should be attempted four distinct tone-colours These can best be achieved by serious, disciplined work on the lines set out in the Lesson on Tone-colour (*Twenty-four Lessons in Elocution*).

Let me draw your particular attention to the section of the poem contained in lines 31 to 60. It begins with a comparison and ends with a comparison and in between these are four symbols Note, lines 31 to 35 contains a comparison; lines 36 to 55 deal with symbols; lines 56 to 60 give further comparisons, concluding with the suggestion that the poet has failed to find any comparison or symbol which is a full and adequate expression of the song of the Skylark Do not regard this comment as hypercritical. Unless you are humbly willing to take immense trouble to catch the fullest meaning of the Poet you certainly ought never to attempt to recite this or even to read it aloud to others—therein we touch upon the cardinal fault with so much so-called recitation As an adjudicator at various festivals I have said severe things on this matter Too often people learn merely the words and they get no glimpse of the Poet's vision.

There ought to be a different glow and colour in the tones when you are detailing the symbols (Poet, Maiden, Glow-worm, Rose) from the tones you use when speaking the comparisons

Line 61. From now onward Shelley addresses the bird as a conscious, intelligent being of the highest order Hitherto, all the figures and ideas have been such as might have emanated from his regarding the bird as a beautiful object. He has been telling us of what the bird made him think. Now he passes into a higher realm of ecstasy and

attributes to the skylark the developed mind of a sensitive and noble human soul

First comes the appeal. Compare this line (61) with the first one of the whole poem. Put a strong emphasis on "Teach" and an almost even stress on each word of the next line; no single word must stand out vocally. The next three lines test the ability to speak with clarity of meaning and beauty of rhythm. I find the easiest way is to stress "wine" on a high note and then to make a series of descending inflections for the remainder, not because "wine" is any more the climax of the thought than "love" but because the voice needs the slight rest which the emphasis affords; also it is certainly easier to place the emphasis on "wine." But test this and all my suggestions for yourselves.

Lines 66 to 70. Each of the two comparisons "Chorus Hymeneal," "triumphal chant" are equal; "or" is not used alternatively, no choice is suggested, therefore upward inflections on "Hymeneal" and on "chant." Also an upward slide on "thine" and a slight rhetorical pause thereafter. At "vaunt" make a downward inflection but remember that as there is still more to follow, this must be indicated by what is termed in older text-books as "partial close" as distinct from "complete close."

Lines 71 to 75 consist of five questions all asked by the adjective "what." The varying of the tone-colours is the main thing to attempt here.

Lines 76 to 80. Here Shelley attributes to the little bird a superideal of happiness: never tired; never annoyed, love always perfect, never cloying. I advise stressing "languor" but with an upward slide on the second syllable and then a slide down on "be." In the following two lines make a rise on "annoyance" and a complex inflection on "thee" something like what is shown on page 77, *Twenty-four Lessons in Elocution*.

Lines 81 to 85. These and the preceding four lines are

the language of sheer ecstasy, unreasoning, but delicious because of their charmed fancy. The main inflections of the voice should be upward, especially at the line-endings, until "mortals dream" when a fall may take place, the tones then rise quickly from "Or how could thy notes flow?", from thence to the close, a sustained, gradually falling inflection

Lines 86 to 90 are probably the most quoted lines of the poem, unless perhaps the first two lines of all

"Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert"

hold the palm in this respect, but these lines, 86 to 90, might be taken from the context and spoken without any reference to the skylark. These alone are expressive of general reflection. They are also the only part of the composition which is a balanced logical statement; lovely as all the other verses are, they are flights of fancy, superb indeed, but still only imagery. The four lines comprise three definite and separate declarations, each is quotable as a complete statement. You can hardly go wrong in speaking these golden but sad reflections if you take thought and care.

From now until the close Shelley gives full rein to his exultation. The lines seem to gather momentum like the finale of a Beethoven symphony. So far as speech can ever do justice to the swelling melody here poured forth, a reciter will need the full mastery of all the principles of elocution, and a mind capable of catching something of the reflected fire.

With the indications and suggestions offered for the preceding verses well studied, let your own conception be your guide. Ponder long; practise many times. Then strive to give release to your sincere reactions.

HE FELL AMONG THIEVES

By SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

"Ye have robbed," said he, "ye have slaughtered and
made an end,
Take your ill-got plunder, and bury the dead
What will ye more of your guest and sometime friend?"
"Blood for our blood," they said

He laughed: "If one may settle the score for five,
I am ready; but let the reckoning stand till day
I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive"
"You shall die at dawn," said they

He flung his empty revolver down the slope,
He climbed alone to the Eastward edge of the trees,
All night long in a dream untroubled of hope
He brooded, clasping his knees

He did not hear the monotonous roar that fills
The ravine where the Yassin river sullenly flows,
He did not see the starlight on the Laspur hills,
Or the far Afghan snows

He saw the April noon on his books aglow,
The wistaria trailing in at the window wide;
He heard his father's voice from the terrace below
Calling him down to ride

He saw the gray little church across the park,
The mounds that hid the loved and honoured dead,
The Norman arch, the chancel softly dark,
The brasses black and red.

He saw the School Close, sunny and green,
The runner beside him, the stand by the parapet wall,
The distant tape, and the crowd roaring between,
His own name over all

He saw the dark wainscot and timbered roof,
The long tables, and the faces merry and keen,
The College Eight and their trainer dining aloof,
The Dons on the dais serene

He watched the liner's stem ploughing the foam,
He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of her
screw,
He heard the passengers' voices talking of home,
He saw the flag she flew

And now it was dawn. He rose strong on his feet,
And strode to his ruined camp below the wood;
He drank the breath of the morning cool and sweet,
His murderers round him stood

Light on the Laspur hills was broadening fast,
The blood-red snow-peaks chilled to a dazzling white;
He turned, and saw the golden circle at last,
Cut by the Eastern height

"O glorious Life, Who dwellest in earth and sun,
I have lived, I praise and adore Thee!" A sword
swept
Over the pass the voices one by one
Faded, and the hill slept

COMMENTS ON "HE FELL AMONG THIEVES"

THIS might be described as a drama in three parts, or a tragic play in two acts with a reverie intervening.

The outline of the story is so strong with lurid incidents as to be almost melodrama. A man of high birth and education in the full vigour of adventurous life—presumably an explorer or trader, not a military man—has been betrayed and trapped. He has fought hard and killed five of his treacherous assailants. It would seem that he was alone because it is obvious that no one belonging to him has been killed or has escaped.

The place is in India, probably somewhere in the region of Chitral in the province of Kashmir.

The first part or act is comprised within two verses, only eight lines but supplying material for some strong dramatic acting.

The second division is the reverie and it takes in the next seven verses, the greater part of the poem so far as mere words are concerned. Without this unique part—the unrolling of a life—the story would be just a vivid, but not remarkable piece of melodrama. The clarity and intensity of each picture of the doomed man's past life flash up in our minds as we read or hear. Each of the four verses describing his life at home, at school, at college is a gem of descriptive power. The vocal interpretation demands the subtlest art of the actor or reciter.

In the final part, only twelve lines, all the phrases are strong and vivid. The dawn: the fated man taking his great, deep breath, the silent assembling of his murderers, then his triumphant outburst with his expression of his faith, and the appalling swiftness of the death-blow; all follow in resistless march and we share in imagination the death-like silence which follows the tragedy.

"Ye have *robbed*" (said he)

Consider the opening most carefully, both the attitude and the tone. The arms should be folded high across the chest with shoulders raised, or akimbo with thumbs to the front and fingers gripping the back waist. Do not let the fingers be spread in front; that indicates mere vulgar defiance. Study all this in detail in front of a mirror and strive to convey the man's pride and contempt.

"ye have slaughtered and made an end,"

The inflections rising to "slaughtered" and then downward.

"Take your ill-got plunder and bury the dead."

Make two downward slides at that line, at "plunder" and at "dead." Differentiate between the tone of the first command and the second. The first must be with careless scorn and the second in graver tone

"What will ye more | of your guest and sometime
friend?"

Here the frankest expression of bitter irony may be exhibited. The whole of the opening speech could be said with quiet intensity, but having in mind first the interpreting of the poem for a mixed or general audience, I would counsel most reciters to make a firm outline of the character in clear resonant tones. Do not attempt too great subtlety. The audience must get a clear picture of a strong, brave man, certainly a gentleman, but with something masterful and rugged about him.

"Blood for *our* blood," they said

This requires an unrestrained demonstration of savagery. Throw the arms over the head and hurl the four words out with a yell. Again, a quieter way may be considered,

but *remember your audience*. Will they get the sense of the passion and determined hate which the words contain?

“He laughed ”

The laugh must come *before* the words. Take pains to get a suitable laugh. It must be short and very contemptuous. Notice also that the obvious suggestion of the two words (“he laughed”) is that the previous speech, “Blood for our blood” was uttered with frenzy. Great care is needed for the next speech—

“If one } may settle the score for five,

I am ready; but let the reckoning stand till day:|

I have loved the sunlight } as dearly as any alive.”

Three distinct tone-colours are needed. The first section from “if” to “ready,” as used for the first lines of the poem; high, strong. For the second section, “let” to “day,” make the tones several degrees milder because the words express a request, even an appeal. Now, the third part, “I” to “alive,” is obviously spoken more to himself than to his captors. From the picture in my mind concerning these false friends, these murderers, that stirring line about the “sunlight” would, if addressed to them, be as pearls before swine. No; he, the hero, speaks that line aloud, even loudly, but without any reference to his immediate hearers. An ecstatic, even joyous tone

“You shall die at dawn,” said they.

In hard, brittle, or steely tones. Strong and with a deep vocal pressure at “die ”

“He flung his empty revolver down the slope ”

Begin high in pitch and with short, descending inflections. This line supplies some of the most illuminating effects in the poem; it indicates the call for a swift, determined gesture of throwing the weapon away, thereby denoting his acceptance of the conditions. In old-time warfare

a captured officer would hand his sword to the victor. This man has been beaten through treachery, he has no respect for his conquerors. So while he gives proof that he will fight no more, he denies them the courtesy paid to honourable foes, he throws his pistol away.

From now until the end of the reverie the tones are dominated by spiritual, or at least the higher mental aspects or considerations.

“He climbed alone ζ to the Eastward edge of the trees;”

said vigorously, but tending towards the reflective tone

“All night long ζ in a dream untroubled of hope
He brooded, | clasping his knees ”

Take extreme pains to make your tones accord with this entrancing picture of a brave, virtuous young man's last vigil or reverie. Bring out particularly the significance of “untroubled of hope.” The conditions described are such as to make all prospects of a rescue impossible. Fear is unknown to this man; hope is out of the question in the circumstances. Hence there is no occasion for the tremors or excitements of imagination. A perfect peace and calm possesses him. In unique, tragical and, (considered spiritually), splendid conditions, he allows “the waters of reflection to glide over him.”

Make the voice reflect the noble surge and rhythm of the next verse.

“He did not hear | the monotonous roar that fills
The ravine | where the Yassin river sullenly flows,
He did not see the starlight | on the Laspur hills,
Or the far Afghan snows ”

Say those words with a rich, warm colouring in your tones; also with something of ecstasy, at a moderately swift but well-regulated pace.

Since the force of that verse is heightened all along by negations I suggest that the effect should be borne along to the *positive* expression with which the next verse begins, "He *saw* " Then the details of the reverie follow.

Having carefully prepared and analysed thus far, it may be hoped that your mood will be sympathetic enough to touch with delicate vocal tones each of the vivid dream pictures which are unrolled in the five verses composing this section of the poem. There are twelve of these pictures. Every one of them should be *limned* with delicate tone-shadings. Each mental picture is a fount of beauty

- 1 The study with his books aglow with sunlight
- 2 His father calling him down to ride.
- 3 The gray little church across the park.
4. The mounds that hide the loved and honoured dead
- 5 The Norman arch and chancel
6. The brasses.
- 7 The playground of the school
8. The race. A series of vivid and swift little pictures
9. The college dinner in hall.
10. and 11. The College eight The Dons on the dais
- 12 The blended memories of being on board ship, with suggestions of the throbbing and thrashing of the steamer's screws mingling with the passengers' voices

This detailing of the visions and memories which make up the reverie will help you in detaching them vocally. While there must be a dreaminess about the whole, each part needs to be ever so slightly emphasized. It must be the aim of the dramatic interpreter to leave a clear impress of each picture upon the hearers' minds and at the same time to avoid any blurring of effects.

"And now it was dawn."

This is to be said with brightness, rather slowly and

deliberately, with a sense of the contrast between the dream and the reality. It may seem futile if I say, "Suggest the dawn," but dwell upon the tragic meaning of the dawn for the man in the story, and, providing your imagination is strong enough, you should be able to convey something over and above the mere words

"He rose ζ strong on his feet,
And strode to his ruined camp below the wood,"

These phrases indicate the calm, collected state of the man as he prepares for his terrible doom

"He drank the breath of the morning ζ cool and
sweet",

Speak this line with a soaring note of joyous abandon then take in a full and complete inhalation; stretch the arms out wide, look up and beyond

"His murderers round him stood "

As the arms come slowly down and the glance also descends *see* at least eight or nine men, swarthy, black, ranged round. Register in your looks the shock at the sudden contact with the stark reality of the horror of the death approaching. Not fear, but a sudden tensing of the muscles and stiffening of the joints, as the eye travels round the encircling group. Even a very brave heart may quail for a moment before its final exit from the present, and surely before such an abrupt and barbarous taking off as awaits this man. This is, dramatically, the supreme moment of the story—

"Light on the Laspur hills ζ was broadening fast,
The blood-red snow-peaks chilled to a dazzling white
He turned, | and saw the golden circle at last,
Cut by the Eastern height "

With the sense of the swiftly approaching climax, the impulse thrilling the voice will cause it to be vibrant and loud. Quietness and reserve will not serve here. The impulse must be expressed eccentrically not concentrically. The whole passage must be carefully phrased. There are no parentheses. High lights, figuratively speaking, all the way.

“O glorious Life, | Who dwellest in earth and sun,
I have lived, I praise and adore Thee!”

This is a superb utterance of a blithe, clear-eyed soul. The occasion is unique, the moment completely filled with tragedy. We must all feel impelled to pity and honour the man. The churchman may criticize the speech because of its frank Paganism, and truly it might suit equally well an ancient Roman or Greek or a modern Nature-lover.

However it may be coloured by individual temperament and vocal quality, the speech must be uttered in clear high tones and with abandonment. “Let all out.” The arms should be flung out wide and forward, the look should betoken rapt ecstasy.

“*A sword swept*”

The mode of death is plainly by decapitation, and in the Eastern fashion: the sword flashing through the air and severing the head from the trunk at one swift blow. We have no means of judging whether or not the victim is pinioned; probably he is not. The picture the mind creates out of the materials supplied inclines us to see the hero standing there, calm and proud, with bared neck. The murderer, or executioner, stands in front of him with a long sword. There is a sharp hissing sound as the blade is swirled round in the air, and then the death-dealing blow is struck. The only tangible semblance to the incident I ever saw was at the old military

tournaments at the Agricultural Hall, Islington. One of the dramatic events was "cutting off the Turk's head" Carved wooden heads were fixed upon thin posts at intervals round the vast arena Then, at a rapid gallop, the horseman, swinging his great sword round and round, would approach the dummy head It was, of course, a test of markmanship to sever the head at one blow

There are two ways of dramatically conveying the incident You may conceive it taking place immediately before you What I have just mentioned should help in visioning the scene. Make the effort to *see* the incident in your imagination That should give vitality and colour to the way you utter the words Or you may enact the movement of swirling the sword I have tried both ways. On the whole I prefer the first But this is one of those instances where an advanced student ought to be able to judge by which of two means he or she can best communicate the life of the picture to an audience That is the one and only safe criterion.

"Over the pass | the voices | one by one
Faded, and the hill slept"

The finale *must* be intense but clear of all obvious emotion. Strictly avoid the least tendency to *exhibit* feeling here The words should fall sharp and almost hard, "staccato" is something like what is needed but, another ingredient is required for which I have no adequate word As approximating to the mood suiting that final picture it is not unfitting to apply those memorable lines from Milton's "Samson Agonistes"—

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble"

THE CROWNING OF DREAMING JOHN

By JOHN DRINKWATER

I

Seven days he travelled
Down the roads of England,
Out of leafy Warwick lanes
Into London Town
Grey and very wrinkled
Was Dreaming John of Grafton,
But seven days he walked to see
A king put on his crown

Down the streets of London
He asked the crowded people
Where would be the crowning
And when would it begin
He said he'd got a shilling,
A shining silver shilling,
But when he came to Westminster
They wouldn't let him in.

Dreaming John of Grafton
Looked upon the people,
Laughed a little laugh, and then
Whistled and was gone
Out along the long roads,
The twisting roads of England,
Back into the Warwick lanes
Wandered Dreaming John.

II

As twilight touched with her ghostly fingers
All the meadows and mellow hills,
And the great sun swept in his robes of glory—
(Woven of petals of daffodils
And jewelled and fringed with leaves of the roses)—
Down the plains of the western way,
Among the rows of the scented clover
Dreaming John in his dreaming lay

Since dawn had folded the stars of heaven
He'd counted a score of miles and five
And now, with a vagabond heart untroubled
And proud as the properest man alive,
He sat him down with a limber spirit
That all men covet and few may keep,
And he watched the summer draw round her beauty
The shadow that shepherds the world to sleep.

And up from the valleys and shining rivers,
And out of the shadowy wood-ways wild,
And down from the secret hills, and streaming
Out of the shimmering undefiled
Wonder of sky that arched him over,
Came a company shod in gold
And girt in gowns of a thousand blossoms,
Laughing and rainbow-aureoled.

Wrinkled and grey and with eyes a-wonder
And soul beatified, Dreaming John
Watched the marvellous company gather
While over the clover a glory shone,
They bore on their brows the hues of heaven,
Their limbs were sweet with flowers of the fields,
And their feet were bright with the gleaming treasure
That prodigal earth to her children yields

They stood before him, and John was laughing
As they were laughing; he knew them all,
Spirits of trees and pools and meadows,
Mountain and windy waterfall,

Spirits of clouds and skies and rivers,
Leaves and shadows and rain and sun,
A crowded, jostling laughing army,
And Dreaming John knew every one

Among them then was a sound of singing
And chiming music, as one came down
The level rows of the scented clover,
Bearing aloft a flashing crown,
No word of a man's desert was spoken,
Nor any word of a man's unworth,
But there on the wrinkled brow it rested
And Dreaming John was king of the earth

III

Dreaming John of Grafton
Went away to London,
Saw the coloured banners fly,
Heard the great bells ring,
But though his tongue was civil
And he had a silver shilling,
They wouldn't let him in to see
The crowning of the King

So back along the long roads,
The leafy roads of England,
Dreaming John went carolling
Travelling alone,
And in a summer evening,
Among the scented clover,
He held, before a shouting throng,
A crowning of his own.

(From "Poems, 1908-1914," Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.)

COMMENTS ON "THE CROWNING OF DREAMING JOHN"

I SHALL sympathize with any one who says "There is no need for your comments or attempted analysis of this simple, joyous, and lovely thing." Perhaps, though, it might be better to say "There *ought* to be no need"; but having in mind those for whom this book is made I think there *is* a need. My first introduction to "The Crowning of Dreaming John" was hearing it recited by a young man. Since that young man came for criticism and advice and remained my pupil for a long period, I feel free to say that his first manner of rendering this poem was an object-lesson of the kind of delivery which obscures its subject instead of clarifying. Yet ecstasy and joy were present in the performance; but he had not the means nor the technique at his command whereby he could communicate this ecstasy, this joy, to others. While an interpreter of song or poem must experience these things within himself first, they cannot be conveyed into other minds until every picture, mood, and phase is clearly studied, and the progression of all the parts is arranged and planned in advance. There is a whole territory in the kingdom of art lying between our own perceptions and the projection of our perceptions into the mind of an audience. These rules and comments are given with the object of helping in the conquest of that territory.

What is the poem about? An incident in the life of a village simpleton. And the treatment of that incident resolves itself into two points of view: (1) what the story meant to ordinary folk; and (2) what it meant to the poet; or we may say, what the world saw, and what the poet saw. The poem has deep spiritual significance.

Here is the bare story. Dreaming John is a beautiful

soul, of the type described, with a wealth of detail, in E. V. Lucas's *Jack*. "Every village has its Jack." If you would know, as near as may be, all about Dreaming John's personal habits and likely history you can find them in *Jack* (*The Open Road*, Methuen; or *Modern Poetry*, The King's Treasuries, Dent) Well, Dreaming John hears that the king is to be crowned in Westminster Abbey. He has earned and saved a new shilling; since it has on it a picture of the king, probably John thinks it will serve as a card of introduction to His Majesty. He tells the neighbours he is going to London to see the crowning. The journey takes seven days. He walks the whole way. At the Abbey he is refused admittance. So, with a laugh to cover his disappointment—a laugh which perhaps the angels heard and wept over—John turns back and walks home again. And something happened on the return journey.

PART ONE

All the story which the world, or, say, the material eyes, could perceive is told in the first three verses. The measure of those verses suggests a brisk walk. Speak them with bright, clear tones. Let there be no lack of clarity in your enunciation. In that rendering to which I have referred, the enthusiasm of the reciter was in excess of the clarity of his utterance. He appeared to be enjoying the poem greatly by himself, he did not communicate his joy to me. All I heard was an enthusiastic gabble.

If you know just a little about prosody you will see that the first three verses are composed mainly of trochees (heavy, light — ◡) varied by iambuses (light, heavy ◡ —).

The first part we may call "The world's point of view," the second part "The poet's point of view," and the third part "The world's point of view and the poet's combined."

You perceive, then, that apart from the mystical

interpretation of John's vision among the clover, it is merely the story of the village simpleton's futile journey. Whether or not you go into the details of prosody you will be aware that the measure of the second part is so changed that it is impossible to repeat it in the same tripping time as you were compelled to use for the first part. The metrical arrangements for the lines are more difficult to name. They all have ten syllables and are made up of iambic feet, varied by trochaic feet; but you may notice that almost each line has two light syllables (pyrrhic [˘] [˘]) occurring together.

The movements of the first lines, for instance, are something like—

As twilight touched with her ghostly fingers
 iambus iambus pyrrhic trochee trochee

This alternation of measures give to the lines a strangely haunting, dreamy effect. Herein lies a great part of John Drinkwater's skill. He has welded the effect of the dream to an arrangement of sounds which convey both a description of that dream and the atmosphere of its unearthliness. Although this phase of the poem begins with a description of Nature we are soon transcending Nature's bounds and entering a spiritual realm. These details are touched upon here—and only touched upon (the study of prosody is an almost endless quest) because if you are sensitive to the verbal effects, which are all brought about by the skill of the poet, you will desire to get something of that dreamy beauty into your speaking. A musician clothing this poem with melody would certainly change from the tripping measure of the initial three verses to a slumberous flowing measure. What I am trying to convey "breaks through language and escapes," but if a hint may be hereby carried to you it will be worth while. Your success in reciting "The Crowning of Dreaming John" depends upon your

sensitiveness to the changing moods of the poem and your ability to merge quickly from the realm of the practical into the spiritual

PART TWO.

Verse 1. A long parenthesis occurs, taking in the whole of the 4th and 5th lines

The word "swept" in the third line must be well poised by the voice so that—

"Woven of petals of daffodils

And jewelled and fringed by the leaves of the roses"

is shown to be explanatory and connected with the word "Down" which begins the 6th line. I have marked this in the text of the poem. The whole of this verse is really onestatement, the bare meaning being. "At twilight John lay dreaming in the clover." The voice must convey this meaning with clarity as well as with all the embellishment which creates the atmosphere of drowsy beauty. The last line requires care if the verb, coming last, is not to have a flat effect. The heavier stress should be placed on "dreaming."

Verse 2. Fairly easy. Straightforward, resonant speaking will suit here. Swell the tones out for lines 3 and 4. Quiet and intense for the next two. For the final two lines, use tones suggesting the coming of sleep, or, if you prefer, the fairy folk. Did the dear man fall asleep, or, to quote Keats, "Was it a vision or a waking dream?" What do you think?

The four verses which now follow supply a test of the reciter's power of conveying what may be termed a sense of the psychic or spiritual. Unless you can answer in the affirmative the question which is put to the audience at the end of *Peter Pan*, i.e. unless you *do* believe in fairies, you are bound to make a poor job of this part. Comments on the text, suggestions about tone-colour will not help much. But you are hardly likely to be

attempting the poem at all if you are not a believer. All must be uttered fairly rapidly and leading up to a rich-toned climax on "Dreaming John was king of the earth."

In verse 3 the technical points to watch are that the words "up," "out," (twice) "down," which come in the first four lines, must be well stressed. Be careful not to let the voice slide down at the third and fourth lines: "streaming" and "undefiled"; you will find it tempting to do so.

Make a pause at "company" so as to mark the wonder of what comes after.

4th verse. A pause at "beatified." But all here is clear, provided you have caught the echo of the spirit-world which is now in evidence.

5th verse "He knew them all" needs two stresses and strong ones. Make it boldly clear that he *knew* them *all*.

Then the word "Spirits" must get special attention. In reciting I take the liberty of saying the word twice in the first instance. The nature of John's visitants must be made unmistakable. That first rendering, already mentioned, failed me here. I did not know *who* they were. Make everybody know that the great thing which is happening is that John is holding a reception of his spiritual friends. They were visible to him because he truly acknowledged them.

6th verse. The awed manner must be sustained, yet the dramatic climax has to have justice. Get as much splendour as you can into your voice here. The close should be uttered with the conviction in your mind and heart that the man who keeps true to his dreams is the *real* king of the earth.

PART THREE

The finale needs subtle care. It should be done so as to indicate that while John *seems* to be the same as when he went away, there is a difference; his spiritual

illumination has effected a mysterious change This sounds vague, but dwell thoughtfully on what has happened and remember that John would never tell an ordinary person what had happened to him. (I expect he told John Drinkwater, who, of course, would understand.) We may say, at least, that there was a new light on John's face for any who had eyes to see No words can state the tone-colour needed. But if you ponder well over the experience described you should be able to say those two final verses differently from the first part of the poem, even though they are in exactly the same measure. If you cannot discern something of what is meant by this admittedly vague explanation, then "The Crowning of Dreaming John" is not yours by "elective affinity," to use a phrase of William Archer's.

This work deals with an experience to which only a poet can do justice People to whom in our ignorance we apply the word "simple" have at times great and unique spiritual illuminations. Such persons are usually inarticulate about these experiences They cannot relate for others the crises of their souls. But at such times things happen to them which part of Ariel's song may be taken as describing—

"Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange"

The poet, having more wisdom than is given to worldly-wise men, has here done for Dreaming John and his brethren and sisters what they could never do for themselves. By studying to interpret the poem aright, you may become, in a measure, a fellow-worker with the poet; and this is a great thing to achieve

GOLDENHAIR AND CURLEYHEAD

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Two little wheels that never rest,
Two little squirrels in a nest,
That scamper round, I know not why;
Two little scholars from the sky,
That learn our stupid ways instead,
Were Goldenhair and Curleyhead
A tiny maid was Goldenhair
With eyes as blue as chinaware;
A baby boy was Curleyhead—
No turkey-cock had cheeks so red
A dear old home beside the sea
All day they filled with noise and glee,
Yet never quarrelled in their play;
They were too small to know the way
A dearer couple never were
Than Curleyhead and Goldenhair

Home is a place where mothers live
And it is glad on Christmas Eve,
When Santa Claus, who never knocks,
Comes down and fills the childrens' socks,
Then holly berries deck the wall,
For crumbs the pretty robins call
To stir our puddings huge will make
The childrens' chubby fingers ache,
And oh! what revels there will be
When father's ship comes home from sea!

For many weeks before the day
There are two little tongues that say—
"Is Christmas Day quite sure to come?
Will Santa Claus have really some
Not very splendid toys to spare
For Curleyhead and Goldenhair?"

And every time the mother said—
“My Goldenhair, my Curleyhead,
All other things I promise you,
Pray God to bring our father too!”

But Curleyhead and Goldenhair
They heeded not their mother's care,
They were too small to think of woe,
They only laughed—“Of course we know
That father will come home,” they said—
“To Goldenhair and Curleyhead”

But day by day a raging wind
Rose like a giant fierce and blind,
And trampling over moor and lea,
Went forth to wrestle with the sea
And night by night the mother wept
And listened while the children slept
And ever dismal tales went round
Of missing ships and seamen drowned
On Christmas Eve the mother rose,
All day with drooping head she goes,
Ah! how shall words like death be said
To Goldenhair and Curleyhead?

Two little children cannot wait,
Each minute running to the gate
“Oh! father, father, where is he?
Why doesn't he come home from sea?”
Two little loving hearts are sore,
Two little faces clouded o'er
“Oh mother, does he know?” they say—
“It is so close to Christmas Day?
And know how very much we care—
His Curleyhead and Goldenhair?”

The mother's cheeks are wet with tears—
“Your father knows, your father hears,
But he has sailed, ah! far away,
Where it is always Christmas Day;

We too shall reach that happy shore,
But father will come back no more
Not till the sea give up its dead,
To Goldenhair and Curleyhead ”

Ah ! who can tell what thoughts run wild
Within a little wondering child,
That lives its own bright life apart,
And hides what secrets in its heart ?
The mother let them weep awhile,
She comforts them, and lo ! they smile.
“ Ah, heedless ! ” to herself she said—
“ What memory have they for dead ? ”

A bedtime comes in every day ;
The mother sat to hear them pray.
Four little knees upon the floor,
Four tender lips that murmur o’er
The words that God can hear as well
As any psalms the angels tell.
The end was reached, they did not rise,
The little maid unclosed her eyes
“ Oh mother, may we say a prayer
For father now ? ” asked Goldenhair
The mother choked a sob “ Oh may
God hear my orphans when they pray !
Go on, my child ” Like flowers in rain,
Two little heads were bowed again.
“ Please God we want our father so !
We thought You didn’t really know
So please, dear God, to make it right,
Send Jesus down with him to-night.”
“ Oh, let the sea give up its dead !
Dear God, amen ”—quoth Curleyhead

Two little chins above the sheet,
Two little socks off childish feet
Are hung where Santa Claus will see.
The mother at her work must be

Two little figures dressed in white
That peep and flutter through the night,
Two little ghosts glide out of bed
Ah ! Goldenhair, ah, Curleyhead !
Four feet that patter on the stair
What do those tiny burglars there ?
No mothers ear can ever know
Those footfalls sound so soft and low
Along the passage dark they glide,
The kitchen door is standing wide,
Within, ah, what strange prize are these ?
Great giant boots with leathern knees,
The wading boots that father wore,
A fisherman along the shore
What heavy burden up the stair
Drags Curleyhead, drags Goldenhair ?
When into bed they climb once more
Their socks are strewn upon the floor,
Those boots stand side by side instead,
Near Goldenhair and Curleyhead

The mother entered, heavy-eyed.
“My children, what is this ?” she cried
“Is this some mischief you have planned ?”
“Oh, mother, don’t you understand ?
Our socks they are such little things
When Jesus comes to-night and brings
Father, they would be much too small,
He could not get in them at all ;
And that is why the boots are there !”
Said Curleyhead and Goldenhair

The mother’s tears a mist became ;
She cannot answer them for shame.
“If little children have such faith,
Oh, why do I despair ?” she saith
“Like yours must be the angels’ joy,
My little girl, my little boy !”

The morning broke, from far away
The bells rang in the Christmas Day
The morning broke who was it crept
To where his little children slept?
The bells sound merry. who is he
In leathern boots that reach the knee,
With face that bears the weather-stains
Of winter storms and tropic rains?
What touch of bearded lips can make
Two little voices crying break—
“Father! oh father! Is it you?
We knew you would come back We knew!”

Perhaps not idle was your prayer,
O Curleyhead! O Goldenhair!
Ill tidings are not always true,
Sometimes the missing ship comes through,
On earth some blessed angels roam,
From some far shores the lost come home
Then e'en the sea gave up its dead
To Goldenhair and Curleyhead

COMMENTS ON "GOLDENHAIR AND CURLEYHEAD"

THIS story in rhyme was written by a journalist of some distinction who included it in a book of his reminiscences published about twenty years ago. He wrote under a most unusual pseudonym—something like "XD 23"—but I am quite unable to remember this accurately, nor can I recall the title of the book or the publisher.

The author stated that "Goldenhair and Curleyhead" had been recited in public many times by a distinguished actress, without any acknowledgment of its source. Quite possibly the lady was unable to give the information, and this is my excuse for failing to do so in the present instance. If the use herein made of the story should come to the knowledge of the author or publisher I hope that either or both will accept my explanation.

A piece of this order is a far greater test of a reciter's quality than might be thought at first. To do it well needs both mental and physical poise; also careful voice management and restraint. These were among the admired qualities of the actress who, it is stated, gave the poem so often, which may explain the reason of her including it in her programme. Certainly the story is very suitable for rendering by a lady. If at one part it seems to be inclining to mawkishness, this is completely overcome by the simple beauty of the development and close—

"Ill tidings are not always true,
Sometimes the missing ship comes through."

The slightest note of obvious declamation must be avoided, as also must be any tendency to sentimentality. The story tells itself. Let it do so. Try to make yourself as unobtrusive a medium as possible.

**THE USE OF DRAMATIC EXPRESSION
IN READING THE BIBLE**

THE USE OF DRAMATIC EXPRESSION IN READING THE BIBLE

IF there should appear any presumption in a layman giving advice upon the reading of the Scriptures justification is pleaded by the fact that many clergymen and ministers have accepted the suggestions and guidance, as here offered upon these and numerous other Bible passages.

There are many indications to-day that the Church is seeking to regain her ancient contact with the Drama. One of these signs is apparent by the pains taken by some of the younger generation of preachers, and by a few of the older generation, to study and apply the principles of dramatic expression to their public reading. Many reflections arise hereupon which would take too long to discuss. It is perhaps sufficient to note the facts and rejoice thereat.

While it is fitting that reference should first be made to those whose elect profession it is to "search the Scriptures," a layman's testimony may be allowed to follow. For more than twenty years I have been giving recitals from the Bible, and people of many ranks and degrees have told me that through having the narratives, biographies, and poems presented after this fashion they have been led to read the Book for themselves and thereby have rediscovered its loveliness. Truly, much good would come to thousands if they could be induced to read this superlative volume without prejudice and sectarian preconceptions. A perfectly open mind about the Bible is a rare thing. The Bible is regarded from so many points of view which are less than the best. It is thought of as almost exclusively the preacher's book; as an armoury of texts; as the battle-ground for all warring sects; a book

for the sick chamber or the penitent's cell. Mr Wells, in one of his irreverent moods, referred to the Bible as "mortifying literature"; probably more than one of us have associated it with something penitential. I recall, as a small boy, being in disgrace for misbehaviour and seeking to regain favour with the powers that were, by ostentatiously reading my Bible, hoping that my parents would take note and account it unto me as virtue!

There are some essentially broad-minded preachers who boldly encourage dramatic representations, and who yet flatly refuse to apply the same standards of dramatic expression to a passage from the Bible as they would to a selection from Shakespeare. It is maintained that religious instruction is best conveyed to the minds of hearers by a complete elimination of any expression of voice which superimposes upon the words spoken an individual interpretation. The argument is that complete neutrality leaves every hearer free to individualize the meaning for himself. A full consideration of this matter involves more issues than I am able to deal with, but the following quotation from the Book might well be pondered on deeply by all who read to the people. "So they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Nehemiah viii, 8)

I will venture to repeat here some words with which I prefaced a Scripture recital in a parish church some time ago, when a rector of liberal views allowed me to occupy the pulpit.

"We are all so accustomed to having the Scriptures read as a specific part of a service that any variation in such a matter arouses in some minds an apprehension of something less than reverence. By way of excuse, or rather explanation of what your rector is allowing me to do to-day, may I remind you that while it is appointed that the Scriptures be read it is nowhere forbidden to

recite them It might be good for us to remember sometimes that our Lord did not read His matchless stories. He *told* them to the people We know that He told them in the perfect way, but no one can say *how* He spoke them; we know nothing of His looks, His tones, or of the gestures with which it is permissible to imagine He may have illustrated His meaning But we do know that no man ever spake as He did.

“One of the noblest things ever said upon Art is put by Robert Browning into the mouth of Fra Lippo Lippi, the painter-monk

‘For, don’t you mark? we’re made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have
 passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing Art was given for that—
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out’

“Since all that is to follow is done with reverence and sincerity, allow me to adapt some of those words to my present purpose.

‘For, don’t you mark? we are made so that we love
First when we see them *acted*, stories we have read
Perhaps a hundred times nor fully understood,
And so they are better, *acted*—better to us,
Which is the same thing Art was given for that’

“But please remember that ‘acting’ does not of necessity imply bodily movement or gesture. It means, in the best sense, subduing one’s own personality to the nature of the character undertaken, or to the sentiments delivered ”

In two of the four examples presented in this book there is practically no place at all for movement or gesture, but there is undoubted scope for the quintessence of dramatic expression.

ISAIAH LII, 13, AND CHAPTER LIII

A NOTE ON THE OLD AND THE NEWER INTERPRETATION

ONE may venture to call this the most famous and best-loved passage in the Old Testament; certainly it is the most famous of all the prophetic writings in the Bible. Until well within the last forty years it had been accepted by the vast majority of people comprising the Christian communities as a divinely inspired word-picture of the rejection, sufferings, and death of Jesus, written five hundred years beforehand. And even to-day this is the interpretation cherished by millions of people and which will doubtless continue to be held by numerous sections of the succeeding generation. The results of the work of experts who submit the Scriptures to the same tests as scholarship applies to other ancient literatures, filters through college classrooms to the mind of the average hearer only at a slow rate, as it were, a few drops at a time; and still more slowly does the average hearer adjust his mind to the results of scholarship even though these are known to be, not infrequently, the work of truly good and religious men. The reason is not far to seek. Scientific criticism of the Scriptures is of recent date, while the traditional view of the Bible is the inheritance of many generations; and according to that view the Bible has the supreme and solitary distinction of being directly divinely inspired.

Many a young man leaves his theological college intending to give his people much of the advanced Biblical knowledge he has acquired there. He changes a purely academic atmosphere for one where practically the whole religious life of the congregation is inseparably bound up with views of the Bible which his recent studies have convinced him are untenable. Yet he is faced with

evidences which cause him to hesitate long before passing on his wider knowledge. He perceives that upon these old traditional views, which he and his fellows have abandoned, there have been built up many beautiful and religious characters. Further, he is aware that what a trained mind can accept without misgivings may easily disturb the minds of simple people to a serious degree. Ian Maclaren in "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush" deals with this phase of a minister's difficulties. Carmichael, the ardent and scholarly young Free Kirk preacher, attempts to give his honest country folk the enlightened views he has but recently acquired at college, and the results are woeful. Says the old dominee who tells the story: "It came to me that if new views are to be preached to old-fashioned people it ought not to be by lads who are always heady and intolerant, but a stout man of middle age, with a rich voice and a good-natured manner."

Fortunately the fires of controversy do not rage too furiously over the entrancingly beautiful selection we are here concerned with. It is easily possible for both the old school and the new to read therein their distinctive interpretations and yet to be in harmony about the main essentials. Whatever the writer of this vision or poem had in mind, this much is beyond all question: many of the details and expressions are, in a marvellous degree, applicable to the character of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels.

In the *Modern Readers' Bible* (Macmillan, edited by R. G. Moulton) the Book of Isaiah, from the fortieth chapter to the end, comprises the Rhapsody (or Spiritual Drama) of Zion Redeemed. This is presented in Seven Visions, and the part we are attempting to deal with corresponds with the fourth of these Visions. It is called "The Servant of Jehovah Exalted." The terms and expressions are intensely dramatic and filled with the tragedy of a sublime endurance of martyrdom, whether it

be the martyrdom of a race or of an individual. It is hardly possible to study the words without experiencing something like the exhaling of a personality therefrom.

My excuse for this wordy preface is that whoever would read aloud or recite this Drama-poem must have some definite conception in mind, otherwise the rendering will be unconvincing, and unworthy of the subject-matter. It may be given as a Prophecy, as a Rhapsody, or Drama-poem, but whichever idea is before the speaker, he or she has to utter some of the most poignant and soul-searching sentences in all language. And, of course, it is not likely that any one will be making the attempt who is unsympathetic to the religious significance of the words.

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH EXALTED

(By the kindness of the publishers, Messrs Macmillan & Co., Ltd, I am allowed to give Dr Moulton's arrangement from the *The Modern Readers' Bible*, pp 528-9)

JEHOVAH

BEHOLD, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Like as many were astonished at thee, (his visage was so marred from that of man, and his form from that of the sons of men), so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard shall they understand

CHORUS OF NATIONS

I

Who hath believed that which we have heard?
And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been
revealed?

For he grew up before him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of a dry ground:

He hath no form nor comeliness, that we should
look upon him,
Nor beauty that we should desire him

He was despised and rejected of men;
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And as one from whom men hide their face
he was despised,
And we esteemed him not

2

Surely he hath borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows

Yet we did esteem him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities

The chastisement of our peace was upon
him;
And with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned every one to his own way

And the Lord hath laid on him
The iniquity of us all

3

He was oppressed,
Yet he humbled himself,
And opened not his mouth;

As a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
And as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb;
Yea, he opened not his mouth

By oppression and judgment he was taken away,
And his life who shall recount?

For he was cut off out of the land of the living,
For the transgression of my people was he
stricken

And they made his grave with the wicked,
And with the rich in his death;

Although he had done no violence,
Neither was any deceit in his mouth.

4

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him,
He hath put him to grief
When his soul shall make an offering for sin,

He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his
days,
And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper
in his hand
He shall see and be satisfied with the
travail of his soul

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant make
many righteous
And he shall bear their iniquities
Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,
And he shall divide the spoil with the strong :

Because he poured out his soul unto death,
And was numbered with the transgressors
Yet he bare the sins of many,
And maketh intercession for the
transgressors.

ISAIAH LII from verse 13 to end then follow with the whole of Chapter LIII. This is from The AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Chapter LII (13) Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high (14) As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men (15) So shall he sprinkle¹ many nations, the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider

Chapter LIII (1) Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? (2) For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. (3) He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not

(4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted

(5) But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed

(6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

(7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth (8) He was taken from prison

¹ Startle

and from judgment. and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people was he stricken (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth

(10) Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him he hath put him to grief when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand

(11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities (12) Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Now read each of these two versions slowly and with careful attention to the variations occurring in the renderings The first "is based upon the English Revised Version, with choice between the readings of the text and margin and such slight changes of wording as are involved in the adaptation to modern literary structure." In the second we have the words of the Authorized Version, this being the rendering most frequently read in places of worship and in many aspects to be preferred for vocal delivery because of its nobly flowing rhythms. The suggestions I offer are on the assumption that the Authorized Version is the one to be spoken

Let us conceive the whole as a dialogue or series of speeches delivered upon one theme We gather that it "forms part of a sublime judgment-scene in which Yahweh (God) in His capacity of judge summons all the nations of the world to hear His authoritative vindication of the Suffering Servant . . . We move in a

great spiritual world, and the earthly dimensions shrink and vanish."

The Speaker of the three verses preceding Chapter LIII is Yahweh (God) Solemn tones, not too varied; inclining to monotone, but rising, towards the close, in dignity and grandeur. With the words which then follow there begin a series of speeches of the representatives of various nations or sections of the people expressing their intense sorrow and their eloquent proclamation of "the moral loveliness of the martyred Servant" It will help the dramatic delivery, and heighten the impressiveness of the reading, to conceive of three spokesmen, each in turn taking a section of the pathetic lament and self-upbraiding.

The FIRST SECTION consists of verses 1, 2, 3

Verse 1 Do not speak the opening question as if referring to some "report" that had been ignored, but rather as if saying. "Who could have believed what we have heard?" Put the main stress on "believed" The question is obviously rhetorical; if any answer were given it would be "No one" Sorrow and penitence must be shown in the voice.

Verse 2. "The meaning is that the Servant grew up in quiet obscurity like a young, unobtrusive, unobserved sapling . . . springing up out of a parched soil It had no graceful form or stateliness that we should behold it, nor fair appearance that we should delight in it"¹

The words must come in a sad tone, as of one saying "Yes, in our ignorance, *that* is how we thought of him" The general reflection of these words is that men and women instinctively turn away from evidence of unpopularity; the words sum up the world's attitude towards poverty and outward ugliness Countless instances occur in the history of art, literature, and drama

¹ O C Whitehouse, *The Century Bible* Vol 2

Verse 3 repeats, in the main, the same ideas with different symbols. Give a strong emphasis to "despised"; "rejected" is also stressed, but lightly. It will be permissible, if preferred, to say "sickness" instead of "grief"

SECOND SECTION, verses 4, 5, 6.

With verse 4, a second speaker begins and continues until the end of verse 6. If anything different vocally is attempted, there should be a yet deeper suggestion of self-upbraiding penitence.

Verse 4, "grief" and "sorrows" unless we substitute "diseases" for "griefs," the two phrases have to be mere repetition. If you hesitate to presume to give any other word than the usual one it will be better to say these two phrases as though they were exactly the same idea twice repeated. But at least do not say "carried our sorrows" as if that phrase were the concluding part of the former. The better way I think is boldly to say "diseases", then, with a falling inflection, you can make "*and carried our sorrows*" logically conclusive. The remainder of this verse to be spoken with intense feeling as though saying: "And yet, all the time we thought of him as one rightly to be shunned."

Verse 5. The tones need to be high, suggesting a piercing sorrow that harrows the soul of the speaker. To bring out this, "*he*" and "*our*" must be very strongly stressed. Also, with the same object, repeat the stresses in the next statement ("*he* was bruised for *our* iniquities"). But do not stress the third "*our*" or the effect of the poignancy of the grief will be weakened. Say "*The chastisement of our peace was upon him*" with quiet intensity, no emphasis; then, a strong extended emphasis on "*stripes*," making the sound an echo of the sense, and end the verse with a caress on the lovely word "*healed*"

Verse 6. It is nearly impossible to advise by written words how to deliver this verse. Notice how each phrase,

until the closing one "and the Lord" seems almost to sob out its burden. Dwell quietly and long upon the exquisite symbols. Once, more than a hundred years ago, the greatest actor of his day read Isaiah LIII in a church during public worship. One who heard him wrote that when the actor spoke this verse there was not a dry eye in the church. The reader was David Garrick.

For the closing section of this verse "and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," the words sweep on to a great climax of feeling, as though the speaker were amazed beyond all comprehension at the spectacle of such vicarious suffering.

THIRD SECTION, verses 7, 8, 9, 10

For verses 7, 8, 9, and 10, a third speaker may be imagined. He "describes the persecutions, even to the death of the martyred Servant, and the gentle uncomplaining spirit with which he bore it all"¹

It will hardly be possible greatly to vary the three speakers' voices since they each have to convey sorrow-laden amazement and poignant regret. But with care and practice some changes will be suggested.

Take special care to touch with delicate stresses the lovely images of the lamb and the sheep; both should be spoken as being symbols of the unprotesting character of the Servant, do not, as is the customary way, make a break at "slaughter." Indeed it is advisable to use the R. V. for this verse at least. "as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea he opened not his mouth."

For verses 8, 9, and also 10, strong, warmly indignant tones.

We may assume that the speeches of the representatives of the nations finish with verse 10, and that this sublime drama-poem concludes as it begins, with the Voice of

¹ O. C. Whitehouse, D. D.

Yahweh This is evident by the change back to the first person in verses 11 and 12 The tones of voice for this impressive finale should be similar to the opening verses, but the last sentences must be in the nature of a climax, slow, solemn, and with the splendour of confident authority

Let me borrow some words of Sir George Adam Smith to conclude these suggestions for interpreting this marvelous passage by public reading

"We have seen that the most striking thing about this prophecy is the spectral appearance of the Servant He haunts, rather than is present in, the chapter We hear of him, but he himself does not speak. We see faces that he startles, lips that the sight of him shuts, lips that the memory of him, after he has passed into silence, opens to bitter confession of neglect and misunderstanding, but himself we see not."—From the *Expositor's Bible*

THE PRODIGAL SON

FROM the Gospel according to ST. LUKE Chapter xv
Verses 11 to 32 The AUTHORIZED VERSION

¹¹ A CERTAIN man had two sons ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living ¹³ And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living ¹⁴ And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want ¹⁵ And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine ¹⁶ And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat and no man gave unto him ¹⁷ And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, ¹⁹ And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants ²⁰ And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him ²¹ And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ²² But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; ²³ And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry ²⁵ Now the elder son was in the field. and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants, and asked what these

things meant. ²⁷ And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. ²⁸ And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out and intreated him. ²⁹ And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. ³⁰ But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. ³¹ And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. ³² It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found.

“What has elocution to do with the reading of this story? Surely here ‘the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.’”

Thus, some years ago, did an elderly minister talk to me. Then, having me at his mercy, he read the narrative aloud as he would in the pulpit. When he had finished he asked, “Now, what’s wrong with that?” He had been twitting me about the subject, his attitude being a rather contemptuous one. I was his guest, so it seemed wiser to waive the opportunity of giving an opinion which might have offended him. The incident was recalled the other day when a pupil read the same passage. I told him what perhaps I ought to have told the elderly minister: “Any intelligent person reading the Prodigal Son with reasonable care can hardly avoid making the narration impressive. The questions which you ought to ask are ‘Do I realize the awful responsibility as well as the glorious privilege attaching to the public reading of Scripture? Are there any means within my power whereby I may present this matchless parable more attractively than by *ordinary* good reading? Will a careful analysis of its various phases help toward that object?”

Will the application of elocution cause it to yield up any fresh fragrance? ” ”

In answer to the last three questions let us try the effect of a few suggestions I have recited this story hundreds of times, and its loveliness grows more lovely to me on each occasion First, I ask you to memorize the whole. Remember the story was originally *told*, not read.

Verse 11 Make the opening sentence bright and warm in tone. Try to imagine your listeners are hearing this for the first time This is the most difficult thing to achieve in Scripture stories But it should be your aim to create the impression of a new discovery. Make two phrases of this sentence, the first “A certain man”—clothe those three words with loving thought about this good, generous father. Then make the next three words “had two sons,” glow with the feelings of deep interest you have in the history about to be unfolded. Now, do not be impatient because I have stopped so long over one little sentence Take pains with the setting of your scene create the atmosphere of gracious home-life Look up all I have said in the other book, about “Imagination” (Lesson 13)

Verse 12 First, a vivid little character sketch of the charming, wilful youth. His speech may be made to express these two qualities. Do you know a boy who always manages to get his own way, whom no one can refuse anything? That winning, coaxing voice, with its note of determination! Well, that’s the tone to use here.

The words “And he divided unto them his living,” should be practised and practised until you have got into them and can bring out of them the beautiful self-forgetfulness of this wonderful father I cannot tell you here how it is to be done, but there is a right shade of tone for each word in that unique sentence And when you

have worked at it and got the secret you will know there was no other way by which it could be presented

Verse 13 Needless to say, there is nothing in the power of words to add to the description of the stages of the prodigal's downfall, but we may try to separate the varied pictures in order to give their progression the best tone-colours in our power. In this verse there are four distinct pictures. The first is "*And not many days after,*" surely needing a tone of wistfulness, and second "*the younger son gathered all together*", here is needed the suggestion of the hard selfishness beneath this charming lad's exterior. Can you get the tone? For the third "*and took his journey into a far country*" The word "far" requires a strong and rather long stress. The fourth phase must have vehemence of tone with heavy stresses on "wasted" and "notous"

Verse 14 has three dramatic phases. In the first one, "*all*" must have very complex and strong inflections. Make it clear that the "famine" did not come so long as he had anything left. There is always a famine in the land when a foolish young fellow has "spent all" among such company as this one had been keeping.

Make the terror felt in your voice when you say "he began to be in want". Mind, it was "*want*," not the mere inconveniences of being "rather short". All the more civilized and polite stages of indigence had been traversed. It was real, vulgar *hunger* now.

Verse 15 There is terrible irony here. Is it a wild stretch of imagination to think that perhaps this "citizen" had been a companion in the days before the "famine," maybe had shared the prodigal's bounty? Whether or no, the sending of the spendthrift into the fields to "feed swine" is symbolical of the sort of help which a prodigal of this kind was likely to get from his former boon companions. Make an exceptional emphasis on "swine."

Verse 16 Is there a more vivid word-picture in any

literature descriptive of absolute physical want and desolation? Bring out with right stresses the dejection and pathos of the last phrase "and no man gave unto him." Emphasize "no" and "him," a complex inflection on "him"

Verse 17 The translation Doctor James Moffat gives to the opening phrase is: "But when he came to his senses" This is illuminating, but, for me, it has a harsh brightness, like an unshaded electric bulb. The older version "And when he came to himself" is like the mellow light of well-trimmed candles in an old-fashioned room Try both renderings "*Came to his senses*" how harshly the sibilants hiss their matter-of-fact summing up of the tragedy! "*Came to himself*" what infinite tenderness and pity the words evoke!

Verses 17-19. This, the longest of the prodigal's three speeches, is capable of many interpretations It would put a great actor's powers to a severe test, and so would the speech the prodigal actually made to his father The "I" should be strongly stressed and followed by a slight pause to illustrate the contrast with "hired servants" as thus: "*I, the favourite son!*" and then with a real cry of terror and agony: "*perish with hunger*" Do not, I beg, speak those words in the calm tones so often used in pulpit readings, which suggest that the young man was merely slightly inconvenienced. He meant what he said *he was actually starving!* We will refer to this speech again later on

Verse 20 If you give this story *memoriter*, as I think is the right way, you should suggest with a little action the father's ceaseless watching for the erring son Why did he see the prodigal "a long way off"? Because the dear old man was always on the look-out At "saw" the voice must rise to joyous ecstasy and the rest of the verse follows in quickly uttered phrases

Now compare the speech the prodigal rehearsed in the

fields with the speech he actually delivered. He did not say all he had intended. And for other reasons you must study well both speeches. The words would come glibly enough when he was alone. They were broken and faltering when his father's arms were about his neck.

Verses 22, 23, 24, provide a rich study of the father all warmth, overflowing affection, bountiful. Observe the sequence of his gifts. The robe first, to restore the lad's self-respect. Then comes the ring: he is not to be a servant, but still to have the dignity of a son. And now the old man catches sight of the boy's bleeding, stained feet: he calls for shoes. Last, with dramatic profuseness, comes the slaughter of the fatted calf. Of all the gifts, this alone has passed into common speech. It is the eternal symbol of a joyous feast.

With the 25th verse the atmosphere changes; it must be your endeavour to make your voice register the change. Think of a sudden drift of chilling wind from the east and the swift overclouding of the sky. Introduce the elder brother with carefully thought-out tone-colours. Much that one could suggest in a spoken lesson cannot be conveyed through the medium of writing. But in depicting this much maligned elder brother, try to indicate rather the weariness of the man than his churlishness. (This is only for quite advanced students to attempt.)

With the words describing his approach to the home, perplexity, incredulity must be indicated as he hears "music and dancing." The inquiry to the servant as nearly as possible in the tone and key of one saying in modern phrase, "What on earth is going on?"

Verse 27. For the servant, the voice of one telling a piece of interesting news to a superior; ingratiating and alert.

Verse 28. "*And he was angry*" must be spoken with unrestrained vehemence. Let there be no mistake about this. Yet in the depiction of the elder brother still try not

to let the churlishness obtrude overmuch His speech should be the hot outburst of a man "with sense of wrong and outrage desperate" As to the correct emphasis refer particularly to what I have written in Lesson 19 (*Twenty-four Lessons in Elocution*)

Years of repressed longings are in that speech His savage thoughts come galloping through his heart and mind like baying wolves Remember the man is probably dog-tired He stands there, a mass of frayed nerves and almost bursting heart Don't fear to express the fierce and bitter mood by which he is possessed He "lets go," and, we know from his own words, as never in his life before. His anger should come like a north-east wind

Verses 31, 32. For the superb speech which closes the story either of two renderings may be suggested the note of pleading with the angry son, or the manner of quiet, dignified reproach Of late years I have preferred the second And *try* to speak so that the elder brother would have the great fear removed from his heart, which was, that there was going to be a second sharing out of the father's means That is certainly not to be implied "All that I have is *thine*" The prodigal will be found a home, food, and raiment, but he has spent his portion And the elder brother is not to be robbed of his rightful share This father, though wonderfully tender-hearted and loving, is still just

Can you make all that clear?

Try at least

THE MAN THAT WAS BORN BLIND

FROM the Gospel According to ST. JOHN Chapter IX
Verses 1 to 39

- (1) And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth
- (2) And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?
- (3) Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents but that the works of God should be made manifest in him
- (4) I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day the night cometh, when no man can work
- (5) As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world
- (6) When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay
- (7) And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing
- (8) The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?
- (9) Some said, This is he others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he
- (10) Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?
- (11) He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash and I went and washed, and I received sight
- (12) Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not

- (13) They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind
- (14) And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes
- (15) Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see
- (16) Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them
- (17) They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a Prophet
- (18) But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight
- (19) And they asked them, saying, Is this your son who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?
- (20) His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind
- (21) But by what means he now seeth, we know not, or who hath opened his eyes, we know not he is of age; ask him he shall speak for himself
- (22) These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue
- (23) Therefore said his parents, He is of age, ask him
- (24) Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise we know that this man is a sinner
- (25) He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see
- (26) Then said they unto him again, What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?

- (27) He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear. wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?
- (28) Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.
- (29) We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is
- (30) The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes
- (31) Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth
- (32) Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind
- (33) If this man were not of God, he could do nothing
- (34) They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out
- (35) Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?
- (36) He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?
- (37) And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee
- (38) And he said, Lord I believe. And he worshipped him.

This is one of the most characterful pieces of narrative in the Bible. In about eight hundred words we are given a vivid, colourful picture of the social and religious life of that far-off time. We hear scholars questioning their Master, the Master's reply and His stupendous illustration in the form of a miracle, the gossip of village folk; the debates of the learned, their divisions, their dogmatism, their impregnable bigotry. We are thrilled and amused in turn (it is impossible to read the parents' cautious reply to their inquisitors and not smile), we see

human nature at its worst and at its best, malice, cruelty, vulgar insult, gratitude and courage, the Divine Healer being of course the centre of the story, while the man born blind is revealed as quietly brave and strangely wise.

It is good discipline to try and recast in our minds anything to be delivered in public whether by reading or recitation even when, as in the present instance, we have the subject-matter in perfect form to begin with. Its perfectness is realized more truly after our own attempt. And by the re-casting process we shall really increase our grasp of the scene and characters.

"Try not to associate bodily defects with mental except for a solid reason" Lovers of Dickens will remember that it is the good little dwarf, Miss Mowcher, who says these words to David Copperfield by whom she has been misjudged. It is not only a far cry but a bold deed to jump from St. John to Charles Dickens, but that brief quotation is almost a perfect rendering in modern speech of the Master's quiet rebuke to His disciples with which the story opens.

The man in the Gospel story was a well-known character in the district, had sat by the roadside and begged for long years. It was common knowledge that he had been blind from birth. The disciples' question was prompted by the idea that physical defects were invariably connected with moral lapses. There was no question in their minds that the man was blind because of sin. Whose? they asked. The poor fellow may have heard the discussion, never dreaming that he was to be used more than an illustration for an argument. Then he hears a VOICE; feels the wet clay being smeared over his eyelids by fingers of exquisite gentleness. "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." Startled by the strange command and thrilling with a still stranger hope he gropes his way along the road to the pool near by. Then, through the blackness of his life-long tomb, comes the wonder of the

thing of which he has dreamed and which he knows others enjoy. LIGHT It amazes and dazzles him. He is in a new, unfamiliar country. For some time he is more uncertain of his movements than he has been in the darkness. He moves as in a dream. By degrees the wonder of his new enrichment grows into a calm and rapturous joy. He moves on towards his village. The neighbours cluster round, gasping with astonishment. They express themselves in varying tones, and inquire of him the details of the miracle. With touching simplicity he describes all that has happened. Now follow the reactions of a number of different minds. The learned, religious leaders of the place must hear and know all there is to tell, so the man is led into their august presence. The peasant folk, his neighbours, had only been curious and doubtful, not unkind. The first debate of the Pharisees reveals the measure of their spiritual blindness. Seemingly dead to all the higher significance of the miracle, their first concern is to cast doubt upon the orthodoxy of the Healer. It is a profanation of the Sabbath day, even to give sight to the blind, according to their rigid ideals. One member of the coterie of judges has, however, a moiety of graciousness, and expresses a doubt that an irreligious man could work such a cure. Then it appears that another section of the religious leaders take the matter up. They bid the man "Give God the praise," but no word of praise goes up from *their* lips.

The poor fellow seems to have been taken from court to court as if he were a litigant seeking the solution of some tremendous legal problem. You and I are inclined to say: Whatever did it matter? The man was cured. Why did they not congratulate him and give God thanks themselves? But there was something more at stake than appeared on the surface. Indeed, they knew that their position and influence as supreme leaders of the people was being placed in doubt by this demonstration of

healing Unable to credit the miracle, they suggest that the man had been an impostor all his life His parents are summoned before the learned inquisition The scene that follows is delicious in its revelation of character. The bullying; the canny, witty answer of the parents, the reply of the man himself He is growing weary of the continual cross-examination. At the end he rises to real eloquence The debate closes with a burst of violent rage. a malignant insult to the parents and the man He is excommunicated Notice that the question put in the spirit of innocent inquiry by the disciples is expressed in the ugliest manner by the religious leaders of the day They think the worst thoughts, and express them

The final episode glows with a holy beauty. The man born blind has not seen much to rejoice at so far in the faces of his fellow men Not one has said he was glad of the event. None has spoken kindly to him Vulgar surprise, distrust, something like fear of him, open animosity and evil interpretation, these have all been exhibited. He has no doubt seen joy in the face of nature, and, let us hope, in the eyes of little children He wanders on, perplexed, rather sad, but still thrilled by his new-found faculty of vision The tones of one VOICE linger in his ears. A gracious Figure comes towards him. Who is He? He has never seen Him before The Figure speaks Ah! he knows now, and soon his perplexed but grateful heart is at rest

There are eight characters in the story These are the disciples (and we count them as one speaker), the Master, the neighbours (here again, one voice will suffice), the Man, the first Pharisee, the second Pharisee (he who expresses the thought about Jesus, which creates "a division"), the spokesman for the Jews, the parent who addresses the Jews

But there are at least fifteen speeches, each having its distinctive tone-colour

It may simplify the process of analysis to enumerate the speakers and their speeches as follows—

- (1) The disciple who addresses the Master A quiet tone of rather high, clear quality; similar to the way it may be assumed you would ask your teacher a question in class
- (2) The Master's quiet rebuke and explanation, then His words to the man One hesitates to give written guidance here about the tone-colour Think most carefully for yourself and use the tones you think most appropriate. Only carefully avoid anything of preaching voice. Gentle in rebuke and graciously kind to the man
- (3) The three neighbours: You need not be afraid of making this incident light and even slightly humorous in character. We can conceive the gabbling, gesticulating company; gaping and pointing, calling to one another to come and see the new wonder; the children running and tumbling over each other in their haste to share in the event. Do not be afraid to make the exclamations characterful. There is no law that the Bible must be read in a lugubrious manner. It is only foolish convention which makes preachers read it thus The whole of this story, as of hundreds of other Bible narratives, throbs and tingles with humanity Treat it with respect but not as though swaddling it with a funeral garb.
- (4) The Man. In all he speaks ten times. Take his utterances one by one and try to build up a definite character study. His first words are joyful "I am he," he cries out to the excited, perplexed neighbours Try that first. Express the joy, the ecstasy which the man must have felt

Now his second speech, when his neighbours press for details He would probably use quiet, awed tones as one remembering the details of a dream. But his account (v 11) is a full and precise one He can tell no more even when, later on, he is harried and browbeaten by the council of examiners.

"I know not" (v 12) in the same dreamy tone The fourth time he speaks is before the company of Pharisees (v 15) Probably still happily and eager in manner His fifth speech (v 17), "He is a Prophet," would be glowing with warm conviction

There is a long interval before he has to answer again Meanwhile, he has stood by patiently, perhaps a little indignant, while his parents are questioned in brusque, high-handed manner no doubt he is also amused and gratified by his parents' reply Which do you think was the one who answered—the mother or the father? I vote for the mother

In verse 25 we have the man's most famous and memorable utterance It is a "gem of purest ray serene" Its truth and logic are so absolute Through the dense fog of prejudice and bigotry the simple, grateful, loving testimony of this wayfaring man flashes an illumination which nothing can ever extinguish One may perhaps be allowed here a general reflection. There must be countless thousands whom the quarrels of sects have only harmed and bewildered, who have yet rested secure upon the central truth of this immortal speech. In effect "Argue as you like and as long as you choose as to Who He is or What He is, I know what He did for me"

The seventh occasion of his speaking (v. 27) shows the man in two distinct moods. First as growing weary of the inquisition, his lovely avowal with which I have just dealt makes no impression on the hard, academic minds Then the tone of the sentence, "Will ye also be his disciples?" is plainly in a different mood from the preceding I think it should be spoken with particular courtesy, as thus "Can it be that I am misjudging the spirit of your questions? If so, pardon me." Do not put the words, "Will ye also be his disciples?" pertly as they are so often read If you prefer to make them slightly ironical, well and good Certainly the man's

examiners took them in that way Their angry retort reveals this

In verses 30, 31, 32, 33, we have the longest speech the man makes It is masterly in thought, arrangement, and illustration Coming from a beggar, blind from birth, it must be assumed that he was one whose brain had been singularly active, and who had thought deeply, even profoundly, about life and religion, and who had learnt something of history From verse 32 it would appear that he knew what there was to know about the degrees of physical blindness It is implied that there had been instances known where non-congenital blindness had been cured

The proper delivery of this great oration, for it is really great although short in actual duration, is worthy of your extreme carefulness Do not make of it an harangue Let it be clear, quiet, and intense Try to judge of its right manner of delivery by the effect it produced at the time The courage and conviction which inspired and filled the words brought swift retribution in the form of social disgrace

By having thus studied in detail the character of this very uncommon personality, his two final sentences will probably come easily to your lips The final one, "Lord, I believe," may be rightly rendered in several ways Let your own temperament guide you

It has been necessary to devote considerable space to the character who speaks oftenest The other characters are also well worth detailed study

- (5) and (6) The Pharisees Make the first pompous and vehement Then with subtle, cautious manner, put the question of the other speaker, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" You observe that no attempt is made to answer this, but it creates a division

For the question given in verse 17, use whichever tone seems right to you It can either be said in a hectoring voice, or after the manner of a modern

barrister, suavely, as "Well, my man, give us your own version and opinion."

- (7) The spokesman for the Jews In the manner of the brutal magistrate, Mr Fang, in *Oliver Twist*, an insult in every phrase
- (8) The parent who answers What a shrewd speech this is! How suggestive of old-fashioned country folk! Perfectly polite, you observe, but with quick wit behind the words

For the rest of the speeches of these harsh and cruel inquisitors, I would say, use the voice of Mr Fang at his very worst There is no scope for the expression of the least courtesy In every word there is malice, bullying, and, in the closing phrases (verse 34), frank, vulgar abuse of the parents and the man

THE HYMN TO CHARITY

SAINT PAUL

FROM The First Letter of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians Beginning at the last verse of Chapter XII and continuing to the end of the Chapter XIII

In the Authorized Version, with the choice offered of one or two slight variations

- Chapter xii, verse 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts
and yet show I unto you a more excellent way
- Chapter xiii, verse 1 Though I speak with the tongues
of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am
become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal
- (2) And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing
 - (3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing
 - (4) Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
 - (5) Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
 - (6) Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth,
 - (7) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things
 - (8) Charity never faileth but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away
 - (9) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part
 - (10) But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away

- (11) When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood
as a child, I thought as a child but when I became
a man, I put away childish things
- (12) For now we see through a glass, darkly (as in a mirror
dimly), but then face to face. now I know in part,
but then shall I know even as also I am known (even
as also I have been known)
- (13) And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three,
but the greatest of these is charity

Here is a matchlessly beautiful thing and the lesson it sets forth transcends all creeds and schools You may call it poem, argument, or hymn In a series of figures, comparisons, and ethical statements, which are blended into a noble rhythm, there is set forth this supreme truth Disinterested but intelligent love (charity) is the greatest power in the whole universe

Get saturated with the verbal content Using domestic terms, "First soak and then simmer" Read the whole slowly and carefully in the Authorized Version as given above Then let it simmer a while Again read it, this time in the Revised Version Then if you have or can get a copy of Moffatt's translation (i.e. in modern English), read it yet again, and I would now say, Simmer and Mix That is, compare the changes of words and variations of meaning. I do not need to say anything to such elect ones among you as are studying Greek, because you will probably be compelled to master the whole passage by heart But if any of you can read your Testament in French or German, please to do so Personally I find much mental stimulation from studying Pitman's Shorthand Testament By all means and methods get familiar with every turn of expression in this noble selection

It is right to begin the reading at the last verse of Chapter xii because Chapter xiii may be considered as the continuing of a long argument (contained in Chapter xii) upon the different kinds of talents or abilities, wherein it

is maintained that everyone is called upon to do his utmost according to the scope of his powers and gifts, and that we are all interdependent upon one another. The main thesis of Chapter XIII is that perfect service is found in forgetfulness of self.

Chapter XII, verse 31

But covet earnestly the *best* gifts and yet show I unto
you a more *excellent* way

To prevent any misapprehensions, remember that the markings and signs for expression are in accordance with those taught in the previous volume, "Twenty-four Lessons in Elocution." In the above verse the tones should be fairly high in pitch, level, and the colour-tone bright. The voice sweeps on in one tone until "best" is reached, then a marked stress. The remainder of the verse in a reflective but meaningful tone with a careful but significant stress on "excellent."

Chapter XIII, verse 1—

This verse and the two following form a distinct division of the whole and a very vivid and dramatic portion. Practically all the main departments of life which afford men scope for their ambitions are touched upon. What is stated is without the slightest compromise: a man may succeed in swaying multitudes by his perfect eloquence, he may be recognized as a prophet, and as a scholar, have unquenchable confidence in his cause or mission, be exceptionally generous in giving even to the point of imposing want upon himself, go at the last to the stake for his faith or cause, may do all these things, and yet having no real love in his heart, may be proud, egotistical, race-proud, church-proud, cause-proud, may, indeed, be spiritually a negation.

The three divisions of the particulars dealt with in this

section, i.e. verses 1, 2, and 3, may be classed as *Vocal, Mental, Practical*

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
and have not CHARITY, I am become as SOUNDING
 BRASS, OR A TINKLING CYMBAL

Verse 1 The subject here is Speech The argument is specially pertinent to all who use the art of public speech, since it carries with it the warning we ought to be willing to face. Excellence in utterance, perfect use of all the arts and graces of the orator, the voice and charm of an angel, yet obviously the deeper question raised is what is the real motive of the speaker?

Speak this verse with fairly vigorous tones. It is usually read by a clergyman in a reflective manner In scope and meaning it is not reflective, but strong, emphatic; really a revolutionary statement and the symbols used are suggestive of a turbulent display Paul knew the charm exercised by the golden-voiced orator—it was a period when a three-years' course in Voice Training and Elocution was considered a neccessary part of every public speaker's education—and the age was famed for its impressive orators The writer of these words was a man the least likely to make haphazard illustrations or comparisons On one occasion he heard a man, a perfect master of speaking, addressing an assembly, and had either known his real character or else had divined that he was "filled with lust of praise and with hypocrisy" Passing out from the assembly into the street, Paul saw a procession going by, and heard the beating of the gongs and the clanging of the cymbals Then was born in his mind the immortal comparisons which he uses here

In delivery make a slight pause, hardly more than a phrase-break, at "speak"; then a series of rising inflections until "angels" which is the highest note reached Clothe the next phrase "and have not charity," with warm

tone, and with a kindling, rich expression on "charity"; just the tiniest of breaks before that master-word now spoken for the first time "Charity" is much more rhythmical to say than "love." Certainly "love" has a greater significance, and for this reason many preachers prefer to read from the Revised Version because the word is so translated there. But you will find it very hard to get much variety of tone and inflection upon the word "love," and it has to be repeated nine times.

For the final phrases of the verse, let there be plenty of power in the tones. Just enough demonstration in the manner of utterance to suggest what the words imply. Remember the illustration is expressive of noise, clamour. Do not be noisy but do be vigorous.

Verse 2 (altered pitch from verse 1)—

And though I have the *gift of prophecy*, | and understand
all mysteries, and *all knowledge*, and though I have
 all FAITH, so that I could remove mountains, *and have*
not charity, I am NOTHING

This verse is concerned with the mental or abstract activities and is more intensely searching of motives. The things mentioned are all high in men's estimation: the power to judge of the future, the attainment of learning, practical and mystical; such splendid confidence in a cause that seemingly unsurmountable difficulties fade away, as if in obedience to some reversal of the laws of nature.

Observe, in speaking, that the attainments rise in gradation. Also indicate by a change in pitch, and, if possible, rate, that you are beginning a new phase of the argument. For the phrases "the gift of prophecy," "all mysteries," and "all knowledge" the tone is slightly increased in warmth, but at "all faith," the voice must take on an awed, intenser tone, because this last is a rarer achievement.

than the others. The end of the series is not yet, however. Although the voice is almost forced to take a downward slide upon "faith," the pitch should be high so that there may be scope for the climax on "mountains." Try now to say the words "and have not charity" with a deeper meaning in the tones than you used when saying the words for the first time (i.e. in the previous verse). It is one thing to have in your mind the insincere orator, the reference to "charity" the second time causes more serious implications to be taken into account. You are now putting very heavy matters in the scale against "charity." So, when you actually say that they are *all* really as naught, make the statement sound as if you *knew* you were uttering a serious and disturbing thing.

Notice also how the repetition of the words "and have not charity" links the argument back with the first verse.

Observe, there are no symbols used in this verse.

Verse 3—

And though I bestow *all* my goods to feed the poor,
and though I give my body to be burned, and have
not charity, it profiteth me nothing

The third and final series of attributes or works are practical. In speaking these there should be an increased, a deeper significance in the tones. Convey the idea that you have already said much and are now about to state even still more extreme conditions. I cannot tell you in words how to convey this effect, but you can get it if you will think hard and get filled with the necessary impulse. In what is now to be spoken we enter upon consideration of phases of human endeavour which require the highest of characters to support. Indeed they transcend all capacities but the greatest. The mere giving away of large sums of money by a wealthy man may be a means of self-advertisement. But when a man gives, really gives to the

poor, and to the poor only, he cannot hope for honour or glory in return. In the fierce light by which we are to consider these words it has to be allowed that a man may become a beggar through giving and yet remain proud in spirit and without true loving-kindness. And now for the supreme elevation of the ideal. Do not speak the next words without deep thought. They express something almost appalling in its stark severity, its relentless searching of the heart. Consider, the man who wrote this was a trained scholar and thinker: he had read history and knew of the amazing records of saintliness and self-sacrifice of men of his own order and particular faith. It ought to be known more generally that all Pharisees were not of the type and manner of those who were so often tormenting Jesus. It is not to be for one moment regarded as a mere rhetorical flourish when this man, who was himself a Pharisee of the Pharisees, expressed his conviction that a man might go to the stake, might ensure the unspeakable torment of death by burning, and yet only die for a theory or an idea and be void of real loving-kindness.

Now analyse the verse. The marking can but give the framework. Imagination must supply the real colour. Emphasize "all" with a long slide down on the vowel, a rising inflection on "goods" and then a complex inflection on "poor"; gradual rising with slow deliberate tone to a high pitch on "to be burned" (convey the horror of the fate). Speak the concluding phrase, "it profiteth me nothing," in a tone of grave, relentless finality, with, perhaps, a stress on "it." Admittedly it is very unusual to stress such a word but here the occasion merits it, as though you say "even all that."

Verses 4 to 7 and part of verse 8 give a *definition* of "charity." So far we have only had an exaltation of its nobility. Now, after the detailed and dramatic introduction which begins with the orator's triumph and ends with the martyr's fire, come the ethical principles. There are

fourteen statements in the series; while all are positive in meaning, eight are made so by the introduction of negatives. At the beginning of the series the tone-colour should be bright and high. Having weighed well the significance of the meaning and beauty of the phrases, speak each member (1 e. phrase) with firmness. For every one of the series there is an appropriate shading or glow of expression. For instance, "and is kind" should have a definite and very distinctive cadence which defies my powers to mark by signs. If I said it you would at once understand. There is needed a coaxing note in the voice. Here is the best I can do in marking—

"Charity suffereth long | and is kind."

Verse 6—

"Rejoiceth *not* in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the *truth*"

The inflection marks merely indicate the direction of the voice. Say that line with a fine scorn on "not iniquity," and with a warm glow on "rejoiceth in the truth."

Verse 7—

"*Bear*eth all things, BELIEVETH all things, HOPETH all things, ENDURETH all things"

The four verbs form a climax of intensity. One may have willy-nilly to "bear"; it is a higher thing to "believe"; a consistently hopeful spirit, maintained in the face of disillusionment, is an even rarer achievement; but we may say that to "endure," as here indicated, marks the highest of the four attitudes of mind and heart. Therefore, I suggest a gradual increase of warmth and feeling as the four words are spoken.

Verse 8. You perceive that the last of the series defining "charity" ("Charity never faileth" or "never disappoints"), while denoting the most complete and positive expression, is made the base, or mental spring-board,

for a further set of statements. The mind is sent back to the dramatic introduction. "Prophecy," "tongues," "knowledge," are now brought in again, and held under a critical light for a definite purpose. Why are these things imperfect? What has thrown them in contrast with "charity"? Just this. "Charity never faileth." This, says Paul, is the cardinal difference between "charity" and all other realms of human strivings. The greatest prophets are often out in their predictions, "tongues" (whether the word refers to actual speech or to the mystical speaking of spirits), all come at last to silence; once there was no such thing as human speech, and there will dawn some period in the dim tract of time or space, when there will again be no speech; "knowledge" is being constantly superseded, new kingdoms of the mind are being revealed every decade, a text-book of any science written ten years ago is almost useless to-day.

Strong tones of assertion for "Charity never faileth," "prophecies," "tongues," and "knowledge," rising intensity and upward inflections, and the phrases "they shall fail," "they shall cease," and "it shall vanish away" must increase in solemnity and dignity of utterance.

Verses 9 and 10—

"For we know | in part | and we prophesy | in part
But when that which is *perfect* is come, | then that which
is in part | SHALL BE DONE AWAY

Here is the absolute expression of the inevitable limitation of knowledge and human effort, also the most humbling thought for the prophet, teacher, or preacher. As Moffatt translates this, "For we only know bit by bit, and we only prophesy bit by bit." The almost free-and-easy style startles one accustomed to the older version, but it helps the speaker to keep the newer meaning in mind.

Verse 9 may be said with a touch of something like satire. A tiny pause before "in part" each time will aid this effect, but the hint of satire must only last a second. There must come a warm glow and confidence into the tones as the voice rises to "that which is perfect," and "done away" is to be uttered with dignity and finality, as the impression is conveyed of the mind finished with finite matters.

Verse 11—

"When I was a *child*, I *spake* as a child, I *understood* as a child, I *thought* as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things"

It is not easy to go wrong with this verse. It puts all the philosophical arguments about human limitations and the unfolding of the stages of progress, in such simple and yet lovely terms. A little increasing stress on "spake," "understood," "thought," is about all I can suggest, except to ask you to speak the verse with a smiling and bright expression on your face.

Verse 12—

"For now we see through a glass, | *darkly*, but then *face* to *face* now I know | in part, but then shall I know even as also I *am* known

Now the argument draws to its sublime close. The indications of change, progress, limitation of human effort, as expressed in verses 8, 9, 10 and 11 are all merged into a simile which is as near perfection as can be; "through a glass, darkly" (Moffatt "the baffling reflections in a mirror") Not, remember, our modern looking-glass with its quicksilver backing (it was not until late in the fourteenth century that quicksilver was used for this purpose), but a piece of polished metal, symbolizing the dim and imperfect perceptions allowed us here, and the perfect vision wherein all limitations are removed "face to face."

On "face to face" there should be a high note of ecstasy, and on the words "but then shall I know even as also I have been known," a slowly gathering momentum of thrilling solemnity, the deepest notes of the voice being brought into service

Verse 13—

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the *greatest* of these is Charity"

There is a stately calm about the final verse, a classic grace in the perfect simplicity and economy of words, only one adjective. Be exceedingly careful to speak this verse with calm dignity, otherwise it tends to sound like an anti-climax

SKETCHES AND STORIES

IN PRAISE OF "PAUL KELVER," AND A HUMOROUS EPISODE FROM THE BOOK

JEROME K. JEROME

It is a very special pleasure for me to include a selection from Jerome Klapka Jerome's best book, *Paul Kever*. A long while ago its author and his publisher gave me permission to recite the passages in public. I have heard many thousands of people laugh joyously over the intensely human scene of poor young Paul's interview with Minikin and Mr. Lott. From hundreds of platforms I have spoken heartfelt tributes to Jerome's inimitable gifts of humour and pathos, and also to his wise reading of life; but this is the first suitable occasion for my writing a token of appreciation. Once again Messrs. Hutchinson have been kind, this time allowing the selection to be printed herein. But, alas, the gracious and lovable author himself is not here now to add his permission, as I am sure he would have done. His executors have given their sanction, for which I wish to express my sincere thanks.

Some arbiters of literature, in their lordly way, are prone to use such expressions as "A quite forgotten author," "No one reads him now." Much they know who reads and what is read! They know what happens to be the fashion of the moment with certain sections of the book-buying public. But booksellers' catalogues and literary journals are not absolutely complete criterions of what is read. There is a vast amount of reading done by thoughtful and intelligent people, of so-called forgotten authors whose books are more than means of whiling time away; they are, like tried and trusted friends, sure sources

of encouragement and inspiration. Only there are no statistics available for these matters.

So you may likely enough read somewhere that the humour of Jerome is too feeble a diet for the present age—that he is quite out-moded now.

In the sense that the fashion of humour changes with every generation it may be true that Jerome is out-moded. Nearly every one who speaks thus of him is judging him by a book he wrote in his youth, a book which, while it has made millions laugh without moderation, is far from being the work which most truly entitled him to high rank as an artist. For every ten thousand people who think of Jerome K. Jerome as the author of *Three Men in a Boat*, hardly one even knows of *Paul Kever*. Yet this is so much a greater work that comparison is nearly useless. The one is a highly diverting account, interspersed with serious, often beautiful and wise reflections, of a boating holiday on the Thames, written, as the author himself confessed, when he was feeling very young and absurdly pleased with himself for reasons which concerned only himself. The other is nearer being a masterpiece in the manner of *David Copperfield* than any other novel published during this century. Like that work of the greater master, *Paul Kever* is largely autobiographical. How much of the real, personal Jerome the book contains was revealed when in later life he wrote, *My Life and Times*.

It can hardly happen that a book of such rich, human interest, touching so many phases of life and character, abounding in tenderness, laughter, and tragedy can lack some grateful readers for many years to come. Because, although the London of Paul Kever's time is of the omnibus and hansom-cab period, the burden of the book's message is an eternal one—it tells of a lonely youth's pilgrimage, and "of the glory and the goodness and the evil that go to the making of love."

The selection here given is not one of the greater things in the book, but it is a good sample of the lighter phases of its character-drawing. As you may perceive, below the things which cause the laughter to ripple, there is the indication of the tragedy which is never far off when a man or boy is out of work.

It is courteous to an author and helpful to an audience to preface any recital of "extracts" or "selections" by a few sentences about the main purpose of the book which has been laid under contribution. You ought to be familiar with the whole of any book, especially if it be a novel, from which you are allowed to recite.

Let it be assumed, then, that you are well acquainted with Paul Kever's early history. Then you may want to make your own introductory sentences. In any event let them be brief. I have known instances where the introduction used up so much of the audience's attention that the subject-matter fell quite flat.

Need I remind you that complete memorizing of the whole recital is absolutely necessary if the incident is to seem alive? The changes of voice for the three speakers are not difficult. A little miming for Minikin's eye-polishing adds to the comedy.

Here is the form in which I have presented the incident some hundreds of times.

HOW I GOT MY FIRST SITUATION

THIS is a selection from Jerome K. Jerome's famous novel, *Paul Kever*. It was made with the author's permission and Messrs. Hutchinson, the publishers, have added their consent.

In the story, Paul Kever is a youth, about nineteen, left quite alone in the world. For several weeks he has been trying to find a situation. He has written hundreds of applications in reply to advertisements, without success. His few pounds' capital has nearly dwindled away when

one morning he receives the following written message "Will Mr P. Kelter call at the above address to-morrow morning between ten-thirty and eleven" The paper was headed "Lott and Co, Indian Commission Agents, Aldersgate Street"

Please now imagine that Paul is telling his own narrative of his first introduction to the world of business—

Without much hope I made myself as smart-looking and well-dressed as my poorly stocked wardrobe allowed, and so equipped for fight with Fate made my way to Aldersgate Street I mounted to the second floor of the house, where, so the door-plate had informed me, Lott and Co. had their offices Two doors faced me, one marked "Private." I tapped lightly at the second Not hearing any response, after a second or two I tapped again A sound reached me, but it was unintelligible I knocked yet again, still louder This time I heard a reply in a shrill, plaintive tone—

"Oh, do come in"

The tone was one of pathetic entreaty I turned the handle and entered It was a small room, dimly lighted by a dirty window, the bottom half of which had tissue paper pasted to its panes The place suggested a village shop rather than an office Pots of jam, jars of pickles, bottles of wine, biscuit tins, parcels of drapery, boxes of candles, bars of soap, boots, boxes of cigars . . . guns, cartridges—things sufficient to furnish a desert island—littered every available corner At a small desk under the window sat a youth with a remarkably small body and a remarkably large head, so disproportionate were the two I should hardly have been surprised had he put up his hands and taken it off Half in the room and half out I paused.

"Is this Lott and Co?" I inquired

"No," he answered, "it's a room." One eye was fixed upon me, dull and glassy; it never blinked, it never wavered With the help of the other he continued his writing.

"I mean," I explained, coming entirely into the room, "are these the offices of Lott and Co?"

"It's one of them," he replied, "the back one. If you're really anxious for a job, you can shut the door."

I complied with his suggestion, and then announced that I was Mr Kolver—Mr Paul Kolver.

"Minikin's my name," he returned, "Sylvanus Minikin. You don't happen by any chance to know what you've come for, I suppose?"

Looking at his body my inclination was to pick my way among the goods that covered the floor and pull his ears for him. From his grave and massive face he might be for all I knew the head clerk.

"I've called to see Mr Lott," I replied with dignity. "I have an appointment." I produced the letter from my pocket, and leaning across a sewing machine, I handed it to him for his inspection. Having read it, he suddenly took from its socket the eye with which he had been hitherto regarding me, and proceeded to polish it upon his pocket-handkerchief. He turned upon me his other. Having satisfied himself, he handed me back my letter.

"Want my advice?"

I thought it might be useful to me, so replied in the affirmative.

"Hook it."

"Why?" I asked. "Isn't he a good employer?"

Replacing his glass eye, he turned again to his work. "If employment is what you want, you'll get it. Best employer in London. He'll keep you going for twenty-four hours a day, and then offer you overtime at half salary."

"I must get something to do."

"Sit down, then. Rest while you can."

I took the chair; it was the only chair in the room with the exception of the one Minikin was sitting on.

"Apart from his being a bit of a driver," I asked, "what sort of a man is he? Is he pleasant?"

"Never saw him put out but once."

It sounded well. "When was that?"

"All the time I've known him."

My spirits continued to sink. Had I been left alone much longer with Minikin I might have ended by following his advice, "hooking it," before Mr. Lott arrived. But the next moment I heard the other door open, and someone entered the private office. Then the bell rang, and Minikin disappeared, leaving the communicating door ajar behind him. The conversation that I overheard was as follows—

"Why isn't Mr. Skeat here?"

"Because he hasn't come."

"Where are the letters?"

"Under your nose."

"How dare you answer me like that?"

"Well, it's the truth. They are under your nose."

"Did you give Thornycroft's man my message?"

"Yes."

"What did he answer?"

"Said you were a liar."

"Oh, he did, did he! What did you reply?"

"Asked him to tell me something I didn't know."

"Thought that clever, didn't you?"

"Not bad."

Whatever faults might be laid to Mr. Lott's door, he at least, I concluded, possessed the virtue of self-control.

"Anybody been here?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Mr. Kelter—Mr. Paul Kelter."

"Kelter Kelter. Who's Kelter?"

"Know *what* he is—a fool."

"What do you mean?"

"He's come after the place."

"Is he there?"

"Yes."

"What's he like?"

"Not bad-looking; fair——"

"Idiot! I mean is he smart?"

"Just at present—got all his Sunday clothes on."

"Send him in to me. Don't go, don't go."

"How can I send him in to you if I don't go?"

"Take these. Have you finished those bills of lading?"

"No"

"Good heavens! when will you have finished them?"

"Half an hour after I have begun them"

"Get out, get out! Has that door been open all the time?"

"Well, I don't suppose it's opened itself"

Minikin re-entered with papers in his hand. "In you go," he said "Heaven help you!" And I passed in and closed the door behind me

The room was a replica of the one I had just left. If possible, it was more crowded, more packed with miscellaneous articles. I picked my way through and approached the desk. Mr Lott was a small, dingy-looking man, with very dirty hands, and small, restless eyes. I was glad that he was not imposing, or my shyness might have descended upon me, as it was I felt better able to do myself justice. At once he plunged into the business by seizing and waving in front of my eyes a bulky bundle of letters tied together with red tape

"One hundred and seventeen answers to an advertisement," he cried, with evident satisfaction, "in one day! That shows you the state of the labour market!"

I agreed it was appalling

"Poor devils, poor devils!" murmured Mr Lott "What will become of them? Some of them will starve. Terrible death—starvation, Kelter; takes such a long time, especially when you're young."

Here also I found myself in accord with him.

"Living with your parents?"

"No sir. I am sorry to say both my parents are dead"

"Any friends?"

I informed him I was entirely dependent upon my own efforts.

"Any money? Anything coming in?"

I told him I had a few pounds still remaining to me, but that after that was gone I should be penniless

"And to think, Kelter, that there are hundreds,

thousands of young fellows precisely in your position! How sad, how very sad! How long have you been looking for a berth?"

"A month, sir"

"I thought as much. Do you know why I selected your letter out of the whole batch?"

I replied I hoped it was because he judged I should prove satisfactory.

"Because it's the worst written of them all" He pushed it across to me "Look at it. Awful, isn't it?"

I admitted that handwriting was not my strong point.

"Nor spelling either," he added, and with truth "Who do you think will engage you if I don't?"

"Nobody," he continued, without waiting for me to reply. "A month hence you will still be looking for a berth, and a month after that. Now, I'm going to do you a good turn; save you from destitution; give you a start in life."

I expressed my gratitude

He waived it aside "That's my notion of philanthropy help those nobody else will help That young fellow in the other room—he isn't a bad worker; he's smart, but he's impertinent"

I murmured that I had gathered so much.

"Doesn't mean to be, can't help it. Noticed his trick of looking at you with his glass eye, keeping the other turned away from you?"

I replied that I had.

"Always does it Used to irritate his last employer to madness Said to him one day: 'Do turn that signal-lamp of yours off, Minikin, and look at me with your real eye' What do you think he answered? That it was the only one he'd got, and that he didn't want to expose it to shocks. Wouldn't have mattered so much if it hadn't been one of the ugliest men in London"

I murmured my indignation.

"I put up with him Nobody else would Poor fellow must live."

I expressed admiration of Mr. Lott's humanity.

"You don't mind work? You're not one of those good-for-nothings who sleep all day and wake up when it's time to go home?"

I assured that in whatever else I might fail I could promise him industry

"With some of them, it's nothing but play, girls, gadding about the streets. Work, business—oh no I may go bankrupt; my wife and children may go into the workhouse. No thought for me—the man that keeps them, feeds them, clothes them. How much salary do you want?"

I hesitated. I gathered it would be necessary to be moderate in one's demands. "Five-and-twenty shillings a week," I suggested.

He repeated the figure in a scream. "Five-and-twenty shillings for writing like that! And can't spell commission! Don't know anything about the business! Five-and-twenty! Tell you what I'll do; I'll give you twelve."

"But I can't live on twelve"

"Can't live on twelve! Do you know why? Because you don't know how to live I know you all. One veal and ham pie, one roly-poly, one Dutch cheese, and a pint of bitter"

His recital made my mouth water.

"You overload your stomachs, then you can't work. Half the diseases you young fellows suffer from are brought about by over-eating. Now, you take my advice. Try vegetarianism. In the morning, a little oatmeal. Wonderfully strengthening stuff, oatmeal. Look at the Scotch. For dinner, beans. Why, do you know, there's more nourishment in half a pint of lentil beans than in a pound of beefsteak—more gluten. That's what you want—more gluten, no corpses, no dead bodies. Why, I've known young fellows—vegetarians—who have lived like fighting cocks on sevenpence a day. Seven times seven are forty-nine. How much do you pay for your room?"

I told him

"Four-and-a-penny and two-and-six makes six-and-seven. That leaves you five-and-fivepence for mere foolery. Good heavens! What more do you want?"

"I'll take eighteen, sir I really can't manage on less "

"Very well, I won't beat you down Fifteen shillings a week "

"I said eighteen, sir."

"Well, and I said fifteen That's splitting the difference, isn't it? I can't be fairer than that "

I dared not throw away the one opportunity that had occurred. Anything was better than return to the empty days full of despair. I accepted, and it was agreed that I should come on the following Monday morning

On my return to the back office for my hat Minikin said

"Nabbed?"

I nodded.

"What's he wasting on you?"

"Fifteen shillings a week "

"Felt sure somehow that he'd take a liking to you Don't be ungrateful and look thin on it "

As I went away I heard Mr Lott's shrill voice demanding to know where the postage stamps were to be found And I heard Minikin's reply, "At the post office "

And that was how I got my first situation

A FEW NOTES ON W. PETT RIDGE AND A SELECTION FROM ONE OF HIS NOVELS, "THANKS TO SANDERSON"

W PETT RIDGE wrote about Londoners. His books simply ooze London. He was asked to name his favourite hobby or relaxation. His reply was something to this effect. "Strolling through and round about the district which lies between Mile End Road and Canning Town." That indicated his quenchless interest in the types of people he depicted. It is pleasant to imagine him, a dapper figure, unobtrusive in manner and dress, pipe in mouth, sauntering at eve, like a modern Haroun Al Raschid, among the crowded highways and byways of his beloved locality. And though he distributed no special largess as was the mode of the emperor of old, he was a literary benefactor to his people, for he made the wider world realize the courage, the humour, and irrepressible spirit of the Cockney. His books have served to bridge the gap between the London of Dickens and the London of the Edwardian age. No one after Dickens wrote so sympathetically and continuously about what are called "the lower middle classes" until Pett Ridge continued the saga. Moreover, his characters are almost invariably expressive of Young London; they are quick in movement and speech; smart and rather assertive in dress and manner, generally companionable if encountered on a ride or journey. The folk he wrote about, or their immediate successors, are they whom you scramble with for buses, jostle against in tubes, share tables with in A B C. shops, stand shoulder to shoulder with in gallery theatre queues, sit beside afterwards when you have won your seats, and exchange criticism with about the play. You will rarely meet Pett Ridge types in the higher-priced seats unless "an order" has travelled their way, and then very likely there

will be some budding romance in progress From his books it would be easy to compile an almost complete street guide of the district. And they tell, as well as words can, how Young London breathes, lives, and has its being His pages are crowded with clerks, waitresses, servant girls, young ambitious married folk, struggling keepers of little corner shops, landladies, laundresses ("Mrs. Galer's Business" is a laundry She is a glorious example of goodness and pluck, and how essentially romantic she is in her one and only love!) All teachers of Elocution owe Pett Ridge a special debt of thanks. He made one of them the chief and most honoured character in "Concerning Aunt Bertha," nearly the last of his works Has any writer excelled him in strict economy of words? His swift impressions remind one of his friend Phil May's pen-and-ink drawings. Indeed, the subjects of both men were in many respects the same And their methods were so far parallel that in the one artist there was not a stroke too many, and in the other not one unnecessary word Perhaps this should rather be said of the results of their methods I have been told that the limitation of line and details of Phil May's drawings was the effect of his going over the original draft and rigorously doing away with everything which could possibly be spared. Perhaps Pett Ridge submitted his MSS. to an equally rigorous discipline He occasionally carried the elliptic manner too far for easy comprehension But on the whole the style admirably fits the people of whom he wrote.

A long time ago he gave me his permission to include in my public recitals the studies of characters which follows. Here is his reply to my asking for this privilege

"My dear Sir,

By all means

Yours sincerely,

W PETT RIDGE "

In those ten words you have the style and the man

Pett Ridge had been a railway clerk in his youth. Quite a number of his characters are railway men, porters, station masters. He portrayed with sympathy and subtlety their distinctive qualities. An active life, generally in the open air, inclines them to cheerfulness; since they are not harassed by the usual worries of business life they often exhibit a slightly detached, mildly philosophical manner. Inspector Sanderson is one of the best, a thoroughly conscientious official. He is self-controlled, astonishingly patient with abusive passengers, kindly tolerant to the aggrieved Porter Hurndall, and the loving tact with which he deals with his somewhat conceited son is admirably shown.

This sketch, or series of sketches, will repay the most assiduous care and study for presentation, although there is little need for detailed guidance. The main character being Sanderson, the manner of speaking for him ought to be within those notes of your voice which you can best sustain. Avoid making him at all unctuous; he would not use much inflection in his tones; rather a level, matter-of-fact voice, with something of a break in it at the close of his talk to Alfred when he holds out his arms to the boy. Alfred's voice, rather more assertive than his father's. Of course, Hurndall is low comedy. Make him as heavy and lugubrious as possible. For the two ladies one voice will do. The author has given a perfect stage direction for personating them: "They said in duet." Let this be your best attempt at a high-pitched, aristocratic female voice. Take each character in turn and personate it in front of the mirror until you are sure you can change to each without confusion. Intensive character studies are excellent training for gaining flexibility of voice and ease of movement.

The chapter in the book is entitled "MENTAL ARITHMETIC." This is obviously because, during the swift progress of the events, Inspector Sanderson has to do some

pretty rapid calculation in his head, not concerning figures, except in one instance, but about individuals

Here is the first of the series of problems set this excellent official

Inspector Sanderson was in his office on the Up platform

"Young gentleman wants to see you, sir "

"What's he like, Hurndall?"

"Rather superior," answered the railway porter
"What I mean is, much better class than you or me "

"By the by," said Inspector Sanderson, searching for some papers, "I have to pitch into you about something Here we are Case of answering back a first-class passenger."

"How was I to know he was a Member of Parliament?" grumbled the porter "He ought to have wore a label, and then I should have kept my mouth shut "

"He called me a fool—not sure he didn't call me a something fool—and all I said was that there were others about. 'Others about' was the expression I used That's all I said "

"Look here, Hurndall, you'll talk till the end of the world comes Run along and send in this young swell who wants to see me."

"You see, Mr. Sanderson, I am different from the generality of men Twenty-five years in the service, and never concealed my opinions There's not many that can say that, sir "

"There's not many that want to, Hurndall I don't want to say anything harsh, but I am bound to point out to you that your position is still that of a porter. You ought to have got on in the world, and you haven't Alter your tactics, old chap."

The caller, apparently tired of waiting, came in

"Hullo, father," he said

"And I called him a young gentleman," murmured

Hurndall, self-reproachingly "'Pon me word, my luck's out to-day.'" He went, grumbling to himself

The caller is Alfred. He is at the stage of being well-satisfied with himself and confident that all he does is right. He has called on his father, with more than one object in his mind. The first is to announce his increase of salary to "£65 a year and a share of commission." This is sufficiently big to cause Inspector Sanderson to make a calculation in arithmetic. The father realizes that his son will now be getting nearly as much as himself, which, incidentally, enables us to do a bit of mental arithmetic ourselves, to find the approximate salary of a Railway Inspector twenty years or so ago.

Inspector Sanderson has just made his rather humiliating calculation and Alfred is about to come to his second point when an interruption occurs.

A train came in and Inspector Sanderson had to hurry away

When he returned, two aggrieved-looking ladies of comfortable figures were with him. Alfred took off his hat and went into the shadow of the small office

"Perfectly disgraceful," they said in duet. "Luggage labelled at Blackheath, and placed in the train, and now where's the hat-box? This means missing the train to Southampton, losing the boat there, and all the arrangements upset. Absolutely shameful."

"I'll make inquiries," promised Inspector Sanderson. "No doubt we shall soon come across it."

"But we want it now. This very instant. At once!"

"You're certain you saw it labelled, ladies?"

"Do you doubt our word?" inquired one coldly

"Only want to make sure," he remarked

"As a matter of fact it was seen to by our maid"

"Let's call her in," he suggested. He gave a word to a porter outside the door

"Such a thing could never have happened abroad," one went on with a trembling head. "It only confirms

what I have so often mentioned. Utter want of system. Everything left to chance. This," threateningly, "this, mind, shall be written about in the newspapers, and you can be quite sure that your cool way of treating the matter will be referred to. A nephew of ours is connected with one of the principal journals and——"

The maid arriving, Alfred's father went forward to put a question, and to receive an answer.

"Then why did she not say so at once?" demanded the ladies. "Of course, we remember now that we decided not to bring the hat-box; but surely she might have mentioned it."

They prepared to go, whispering that the working-classes were in league with each other. Inspector Sanderson forced upon them various articles which they appeared inclined to leave on the table.

"No notice shall be taken of the matter this time," promised the elder graciously, "you must please take care that nothing of the kind happens again."

"We'll do our best," he promised gravely.

"How do you manage to keep your temper, father, with people of that kind?"

"It isn't a gift, my lad," he explained. "It's acquired by taking a lot of pains. A good deal like being in charge of a menagerie; with everyone about you half off their heads, you find it necessary to keep calm."

That is a bit of fine comedy. It is the quintessence of Pett Ridge. I hope you perceive something of the acute and trained observations which have gone to the writing of that brilliant little scene, all done with about 250 words. Do not fail to dwell on the significance of the two ladies talking "in duet." A whole page of analysis could not so well convey their mentality. There is no touch of exaggeration in the picture. You will be better able to judge of the skill behind such writing when, after memorizing the words, you try to render that scene. Notice particularly that it is *Comedy* and not *Farce*. There must be no

overstressing to gain laughs. Once again, I urge you, observe life for yourselves!

Other interruptions follow. Then, at length, the lines of communication are clear for Alfred and his father for about five minutes. The youth, with some hesitation, and consultation of notes taken from his waistcoat pocket, unburdens himself. It seems that Mrs. Sanderson, an excellent creature, is, if one may venture the term, "a nagger." She has not realized that Alfred is no longer a little boy! She continues to treat him as one, always orders him to wipe his boots on entering the house, and it is more than he dares, to put an elbow on the table. The father points out to Alfred that she treats him very much in the same way. Alfred retorts that the father does not mind and that he (Alfred) does. What the lad is really leading up to is that he wants to leave home and go into "apartments." Then follows a passage which reveals how deeply Pett Ridge understands the life of the people he depicts. The father, with a quiet intensity which only just hides his deep emotion, tells his son why he does not mind the mother's "nagging" manner. "It's gratitude—nothing but gratitude," says this wise, simple-hearted railwayman. He knows his wife's true value, her honesty, "as straight as a die," is his tribute to her, he knows of many homes ruined by women who drink or who have other weaknesses.

Alfred listens attentively, then—

"What about my finding apartments, father?"

"Supposing we make a sort of compromise. Supposing we remove to a bit bigger house. Supposing you arrange to pay something more out of your increase, and supposing you have a decent-sized room and keep it all to yourself, so that if you want to ask a few friends to see you, and you don't think we are good enough to see them, why, you can easily do so. Supposing you have a latch-key on the understanding that if you want to be out later than

eleven o'clock, why you just mention it And supposing—supposing we four make up our minds to stick together, and put up as well as we can with each other's faults, so that—so that, when your mother or me happens to give it all up, and hop off to another world, why, then you, Alf, my boy, and your sister Winnie won't have to look back and blame yourself for anything you have done or that you've omitted to do What do you say to all that, my lad?"

"You don't give me a chance to say anything but 'yes,' father I don't want to be unreasonable"

"We none of us do," jovially, "We're going to get along, after this, as if all the signals were in our favour Green light all the way along I am uncommonly glad we've had this talk, because it's cleared the fog There's only—only one thing more I want you to do"

He held out his arms, and the lad, slipping from the table, ran to him

"Upon my word," declared Inspector Sanderson, "your face is quite bristly Getting a grown man, you are!"

Porter Hurndall, putting his red and still aggrieved face in at the door, announced that Mr Sanderson was wanted on the down main line platform

"By the by, sir, I told you a lie, and I'm sorry for it Twenty-six year, not twenty-five Six-and-twenty year I've been in the service trying to give satisfaction to the public and my superior officers And up to the present, never done neither."

"See my boy across the bridge, Hurndall, into the Mid-Kent train Take care of him, because he's valuable"

"Wait till he's put in twenty-six of the best, and then we shall see what he's really made of"

THE GENIUS OF MARY WEBB, WITH
AN EXTRACT FROM "PRECIOUS BANE"
"THE BAITING"

"PRECIOUS BANE" is the most beautiful and powerful book of its class and period ever published. In quality its equals can only be found among those masterpieces which exhibit in terms of tragedy and comedy some distinctive phase of human experience, with perfect "truth and beauty." Truth in Mary Webb's writing often reveals itself like the startling and disarming frankness of an unspoilt child, while beauty is manifested in an alluring, deep, glowing quality which can only be felt and rejoiced over, not described. All through *Precious Bane* there is exhaled a strange sweetness—one must borrow the author's words to define it—"like a gentle, fugitive fragrance of spring flowers, dried with bergamot and hay." And yet woven into the fabric of the story are humour, passion, love, hate, cruel ignorance, and golden faith.

I believe Mary Webb has been compared with Thomas Hardy. But the novelist of Shropshire scarcely less recalls the novelist of Wessex by what she is as by what she is not. Except that both write of the countryside, with intense and passionate truth, they have really little in common in style or reading of life. Indeed, Mary Webb is just her unapproachable exquisite self and we shall be wise to accept her gratefully and leave comparisons.

Prue Sarn, object of malignant superstition because of her disfigured lip, is a great woman, great in faith, in toil, in patience, in humble self-denying love.

Something akin to her radiant frankness can be yet discerned in certain older-fashioned countrywomen. Happy the reader, who, becoming acquainted with Prue in

Precious Bane, can recall someone seen in the flesh, worthy to claim spiritual kinship with her

The book teems with characters as real as language, harnessed to a superb imagination, can paint them: Wizard Beguildy and his beautiful daughter, the ill-fated Jancis, the horrible farmers, Grimble and Huglet, and a dozen others. Gideon Sarn is a portrait, almost overwhelming in power, of the ruthlessness of an obsession-driven man. As for Kester Woodseaves, his dazzling courage, physical beauty and modesty are well shown in the selection which I am proud to be able to present here.

While this extract forms a complete, intensely dramatic episode, I must insist that no one can hope to convey any real hint of the glory of Prue Sarn who has not read the whole of this wonderful book, and I should think very poorly of a student who, lacking that preparation, attempted to recite "The Baiting."

Since the narrator is a woman, the piece will be best interpreted by one. Not that I can see any strong reason why a man should not tell the story. But by whomsoever the attempt is made, the fact that Prue Sarn is the speaker must be all the time borne in mind. And of reciting in the ordinary sense there must be a minimum, that is, of any very marked characterizations. As a suggested model, if you have this good fortune, listen to some intelligent countrywoman telling a tale; watch carefully her expressions and gestures. Don't get the idea that this is an easy piece to render well. In reciting as in acting it is sometimes much harder to leave out than to put in.

THE BAITING

from

Precious Bane

By MARY WEBB

(Book Three, Chapter Two)

Adapted for recital

THERE it all was, then, the crowd, the shouting, the yapping and snarling of the dogs . . . the bull, very skeered, for it was grumbling to itself . . . There they all were, and there was Kester I . . . hastened my steps with a wonder in my heart the while what he could be doing in such a place For I thought him to be a different man to all these Yet such faith I had in him that I was sure, if he was here, that he was here for good And something drove me on so that I must . . . keep nigh him, as if I was his angel for that day. A poor angel, but God minds not much, I think, what His angels be, so that they do His work proper

I kept close to Kester Woodseaves, yet not so close that he might see me So it was that I heard all he said to the men who stood about the ring with their dogs, a bit apart from the crowd. . . . The dogs were fierce and ugly . . . mostly they were terriers, but there were a good few bulldogs . . . and there were a mort of mongrels.

The men all turned towards Kester when he came up, and Farmer Huglet, the chief of them, called out—

“Where’s your dawg?”

Mister Huglet was a great raw-looking man who seemed as if he’d come together accidental and was made up of two or three other people’s bodies. . . . Whenever he couldna understand anything, he laughed, and his laugh was enough to frighten you. . . . Grimble was hand-in-glove with him, and while Huglet stuck his red snub nose in the air, Grimble kept his long pale one down, so

between them they didna miss much They'd each got two dogs

"Well, weaver, where's your dawg?"

"I've got none "

"No dawg? Stand aside then "

But he stood where he was so slim and straight in his green coat . He wore no beard nor whiskers, so you could see the shape and colour and lines of all his face, which seemed to me a face you could never tire of looking on . . He looked round about him and said

"Chaps, I've come to ask ye to stop this "

There was a long, bepuzzled silence. Then Huglet laughed and slapped his thigh, and roared again .

"Well, that's a good 'un! Stop the bull-baiting, oot, young fellow?"

"Ah I'd lief stop it "

"And what for would you stop it, dear 'eart?" asked Grimble in a soft, sing-song voice . . .

"I'd lief it was stopped all over England."

"You'd lief a deal, young man Why, I tell ye there's bin bull-baiting in England ever since it *was* England! Take away the good old sport and it wouldna *be* England!"

"Chaps," says Kester, very pleading, "it be a pity on so fine a day to set one poor creature to tear another Devil's work it be If it's fighting you want, why canna you wrestle, or box man to man? Look ye! To make a bit of sport, I'll take any six of ye on, one after another, to wrestle The one that beats me by most shall take my coat, and the next shall take my hat and weskit. Now then!"

Nobody said anything, only they shuffled a bit, and looked here and there. Everybody seemed to know that Kester was a very good wrestler, and nobody seemed to take to the job. Mister Grimble looked at Kester as if he hated him He said . "The young man speaks well Now, I'll fall in with all he says and agree to the stopping of the baiting this day, on one condition "

"Out with it," says Kester

"That you take on the dawgs yourself"

Mister Grimble gave a spiteful cackling laugh, and Mister Huglet roared agen

"Got ye there, me lad!" he shouted

Kester looked round

"Chaps," he says, "if so be I agree to Mister Grimble's plan and take on the dogs one by one, not to kill 'em, but to put 'em on chain with nought but my bare hands, and they as savage as you like, if I do this at my own risk, will you give it me in writing as there wunna be another baiting in Lullingford for ten years? And if I fail to put any dog on chain, I've lost and the baiting goes on"

Everybody's tongue was loosed at that.

"God bless me!"

"Dear to goodness!"

"Domm it!"

"Well, that beats all, dang it!"

There was a regular clack of voices

When Mister Huglet could speak for laughing, he explained to all the people what was doing.

"Hands up for it!" he called out

All but about a dozen held up their hands

"Done!" says Mister Huglet "And done *for*, my fine feller"

I couldna think of ought to do But one thing I was determined on, I'd keep nigh him, and when he was down I'd rush in and drag him away, and if Grimble interfered it ud be the worse for him There's none so fierce as a loving woman. . . . I went to the refreshment booth and stole the carving knife . and hid it under my flounced gown But . there was to be summat more like a miracle than anything I'd seene afore. This was the way of it

"Go to the mid of the wall," says Huglet, "and fasten the dawgs to the bull chain . . ."

"Mister Towler's dawg!" says the head of the ring.
"Ready!"

They loosed Towler's terrier, the savagest little beast in the place

"At 'im! Bite 'im!" shouts Towler, and I was like to faint.

And then it came to pass

Kester stepped forward

"Well, Bingo!" he says "Good dog!"

Bingo stopped, looked at Towler as much as to say he'd made a mistake, and ran to Kester as pleased as Punch, wagging tail and fawning round "We be friends, binna we?" says Kester

Towler gave a curse, and Huglet looked black as night. But nobody could say it wunna fair and square, and some of the better sort laughed and said. "Good for you, lad!"

It was the same with the "Mug o' Cider" dog, and the next. As the owners came up to fetch them when they were on the chain, they looked very old-fashioned and taken aback

Kester laughed

"I like a dog," he says "Dumb things be my fancy You couldna know it, but so it is, and I can only see one dog here as inna friend to me, being new-come to these parts."

"Ah," says Grimble, "You wunna play yer May-games with Toby Indeed to goodness, if you get off with your life you'll do well." . .

There were a sight more dogs yet—

(Kester chained each dog as by magic) . . He'd finished but for Grimble's dog There was a roar, and I saw (oh, my dear love!) that the dog had got him by the throat.

I caught Grimble's shoulder.

"Take yer dog off!" I said

Grimble never stirred

A second of that grip and he as I loved so dear ud be dead and cold. I rushed forward, I that had never wilfully hurt any living creature, and as the great beast stood

reared with his teeth in my master's throat, I ran him through the heart

The blood spurted, and the heavy body fell down all of a heap, and Kester with it

I pulled him away and dragged the dog's jaws apart. There seemed to be no life in Kester.

"Water!" I says to Huglet . . . "Fetch water, you murderer! Brandy, Mister Camlet, please!"

(Camlet was the apothecary Prue had fetched him beforehand during an interval)

A fire was burning quicker than it takes to tell it. . . . Mr. Camlet burnt the bite, and Kester awoke with a shout of agony, for being in a dead swoon he hadna been ready for the pain

"There, there, my dear!" I says. For the shriek went through my heart. "There, there. It be done now! None shall touch you now." Mister Camlet bound him up, and I washed his face with cold water and gave him more brandy

"Not a deep wound," says Mister Camlet. "We were only just in time though."

"We couldna help but be in time," I says, "I be his angel for to-day." And with that the green field swam up afore me and I swooned clean away.

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A FEW WORDS ABOUT "IAN MACLAREN"

An extract from "Young Barbarians"

THERE has hardly ever been a more striking instance of a man being almost forced into successful authorship than that of the distinguished Scottish Presbyterian preacher, Doctor John Watson, who wrote under the picturesque pen-name, "Ian Maclaren"

The circumstance leading to this event, which has been productive of intense delight to millions of readers, was as follows. While on a visit to W. Robertson Nicoll, John Watson entertained the family with some racy stories and character sketches. Nicoll was so impressed with these that he suggested that Watson should make some articles out of them. The idea was not welcomed but Nicoll kept on persuading. Eventually one sketch was written. It was disappointing, though clever. The charm, the vigour and crispness of the spoken narrative were evidently not there. But having once started, Watson continued and, at last, after a "prodigious amount of labour," he must have recaptured the original and elusive spirit and made it serve his will. That sketch was *A Lad of Paurts*, which told how the schoolmaster made Drumsheugh (a great soul and a noble lover) support a promising boy at the University. This was followed by others, until the series formed the book, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*. The account of the book's success—over a million copies were eventually sold—and of the reception of the succeeding volume, *The Days of Auld Lang Syne*, forms one of the romances of the publishing world. Afterwards, Ian Maclaren practically never left off writing. His death in 1900 at the age of fifty-nine, while on a lecture tour in America, was a tragedy of overwork.

Incidentally, I think I ought to tell all students that I once heard this greatly gifted man express in most emphatic terms his regret that he had never studied elocution. Further, some one who knew him and was well qualified to judge, declared that had Ian Maclaren only used his voice according to scientific principles, his valuable life might have been greatly extended. The actual cause of his death was what appeared to be an ordinary sore throat. This developed quickly into tonsilitis, one of the scourges which he in wait for the overstrained throat.

Someone in the late 'nineties dubbed three Scottish writers "The Kailyard School." These three were James Matthew Barrie, Samuel Rutherford Crockett, and Ian Maclaren. But as Robertson Nicoll said "There was hardly anything in common among them save that they all wrote on Scottish life and character, and also on Scottish religion." Barrie's work in this realm exudes a pensive charm, the smiles nearly always have a wise-like character and a background of tears. Through Crockett's stories of "Grey Galloway," the chill wind seems generally blowing. The sun often shines, but nearly always between lowering clouds. Ian Maclaren is distinguished for persuasive tenderness and great urbanity. It may be said that his humour bubbles, while Barrie's meanders.

Naturally, most of Ian Maclaren's characters had some connection with the Kirk. But as an interpreter of boys he touched a new vein. There is nothing quite like *Young Barbarians* in any other book dealing with school life. Probably it is really more loved by grown folk than young ones. Boys of my acquaintance were never very enthusiastic about the book. Perhaps the reason is that the stories of the Seminary at Muirtown (which, I believe, is actually Perth), are the sort which men like to recount to each other about their own boyhood. The events are seen through "memory's sunset ray." Schoolmasters love the book. All that Robertson Nicoll says about it in his

admirable life of Ian Maclaren is "There followed *Young Barbarians*, a book for boys, published in 1901. It was cordially received and had a great circulation." For me there is none other of its kind, and Mr Frederick Watson, the beloved author's son, has made me very happy by adding his permission to Messrs Hodder and Stoughton's for the following richly humorous extract to be given here. I have recited it all over the Kingdom, and, let me assure you, it is still a winner of laughter and applause if well studied, thoroughly mastered, and done with right spirit.

The Baillie is so well described that there is nothing to add by way of hint. The Speech of London John should be an expressionless drawl.

An attempt must be made to convey the Scottish accent in the three speaking characters. But it takes considerable practice and much pains to manage any dialect other than your own, supposing you to have one. I spent many months trying to approximate to a passable Scottish, but even now I hesitate to attempt it very far North!

BAMBOOZLING A BAILIE

from

Young Barbarians

By IAN MACLAREN

Adapted for recital

THERE IS no person in a Scots country town to be compared with a Bailie for authority and dignity, and Bailie MacConachie of Muirtown, was a glory to his order: he stood six feet in his boots and his erect carriage conveyed the impression of six inches more. His waistband passed forty-eight inches; but, to do the great man justice, his chest measure was forty-two. His broad, clean-shaven, solemn countenance suggested unfathomable depths of wisdom. His voice was deep and husky, and the clearance of his throat could be heard half a street away and was like the sealing of a legal deed. Never since he became Bailie had he seen his boots—at least upon his feet—and his gait, as became his elevation, was a stately amble.

In private life the Bailie was a superior grocer, nor was he above his trade for eight hours a day. When not engaged upon official work, he could be found behind his counter, yet even there he seemed to be upon the bench. And though the Bailie committed one big, blazing indiscretion, and suffered terribly in consequence thereof, he was a good and honest man.

Every one wondered that a man so sagacious should deliberately enter into a feud with the boys of the Seminary. Any person who goes to war with boys is bound to be beaten. The Devil himself is the unfailing ally in the escapades of all genuine boys.

The original cause of the feud was that Jock Howieson during a game of rounders played in front of the Bailie's private residence, sent the ball crack through the plate-glass

window of the magistrate's dining-room. It was a fearful thing to happen but the maddest thing the magistrate could do was to make that ball a cause of war. It was easy enough to go to the school and lodge a complaint, but as he could not identify the culprit and no one would tell on Jock, the Bailie departed worsted, and the address which he gave to the boys was received with derision. When he turned from the boys to the master, he fared no better, for Bulldog (this was the nick-name given by his affectionate pupils) told the great man plainly that his (Bulldog's) business ceased at the outer door of the Seminary, and that it was not his business to keep order on the Terrace.

There is a foolish streak in every man and the Bailie went to his doom. As the school authorities refused to do their duty—for which he would remember them in the Council when questions of salary and holidays came up—the Bailie fell back on the police, who had their own thoughts about his policy, but dared not argue with a magistrate, and one morning an able-bodied constable appeared on the scene and informed the amazed school that he was there to prevent them playing on the Terrace. No doubt he did his duty according to his light, but neither he nor six constables could have quelled the Seminary any more than you can hold quicksilver in your hand. When he walked with stately step up and down the broad pavement before the Seminary, the boys went up and played opposite the Bailie's house, introducing his name into conversation, with opprobrious remarks regarding the stoutness of his person and the emptiness of his head. If the constable, with the fear of the magistrate before his eyes, went up to stand as a guard of honour before the Bailie's house, the school went down then to the playground and held a meeting of triumph, challenging the constable to come back to the Seminary, and telling him what they would do to him. At last, being weary of the constable, the school turned its attention to the Bailie.

Next Friday evening (as the result of various debates,

plans and suggestions), an Art Committee met in a stable-loft of Mr McGuffie senior (he was the father of Spueg, one of the notable members of the school), and devoted their skill—which was greater than ever they showed in their work—to the elaboration of a high-class advertisement which was to be shown round a certain district in Muirtown, and which they hoped would stimulate the custom of Bailie MacConachie’s shop (We shall refer later to the subject-matter of the advertisement)

Upon Saturday, at noon, just as the Bailie was going along the Terrace to his house and congratulating himself that on that day at least he was free from all annoyance by the way, another character of Muirtown had started out through a very different part of the city. London John was as well known in Muirtown as the Bailie himself, and in his way was quite as imposing. Tall and gaunt, without an ounce of superfluous flesh, and with an inscrutable countenance, dressed in a long frock-coat which he had worn for at least a quarter of a century, and a tall hat which he had rescued from an ashpit, with the remains of a pair of trousers. London John stalked with majesty through the streets of Muirtown. He earned his living as a sandwich man, carrying in coals, or doing any odd jobs. He could neither read nor write, but he remembered a number and never forgot what was due to him, and the solitary subject on which he spoke was the wonders of London, where it was supposed he had lost such reason as he once possessed. His coming was always welcome in the poorer parts of the town, for the sake of his discourse on London, but never had he received such an ovation before in the Vennel, which was a district largely inhabited by tramps and casual labourers of all kinds. Hung upon his shoulders were two boards covered with thick white paper. On each was the following legend—

Cheap Tea' Cheap Tea' Cheap Tea'

Sale of Bankrupt Stock

at

BAILIE MacCONACHIE'S

The FAMOUS ITALIAN WAREHOUSEMAN,

49, St Andrew Street

ELEVENPENCE-HALFPENNY PER POUND

Sale begins at one o'clock on Saturday

GLASS OF WHISKY FREE TO ALL PURCHASERS

Poor People Specially Invited'

Be early!

Be early!

BAILIE MacCONACHIE'S

CHEAP TEA'

CHEAP TEA!!

CHEAP TEA!!!

London John was brought to a standstill Tinkler Tam, who jogged round the country with small wares, read aloud the whole announcement to a crowd, who could appreciate the cheapness of the tea, and whose tongues began to hang out at the very thought of the whisky

It struck the Bailie as he returned from mid-day dinner, and long before he reached St Andrew's Street, that something was happening People looked curiously at him, and having made as though they would have spoken, passed on, shaking their heads. When he turned into the familiar street down which he was accustomed to parade with a double weight of dignity, an enlivening spectacle met his eyes Every shopkeeper was out at his door . and the windows above the shop were full of faces Opposite his own most respectable place of business the street was crammed from side to side with a seething mob It was composed of the riff-raff of Murtown collected in answer to Bailie MacConachie's generous offer; they were all ready to buy the tea, and a large number of them particularly ready for the whisky.

The Bailie's chief assistant having refused to comply with the terms of the advertisement, the danger of a riot was spreading and the police had appeared upon the scene. It was at this point that the Bailie appeared, and was received with frantic applause and a babel of appeal.

"Hurrah for the Bailie! Come awa' man, quick, else yir shop will be wreckit. It's time ye started on the tea and whisky. Make way for the Bailie. He's coming to start the auction. Three cheers for Bailie MacConachie!"

And the Bailie, limp and dishevelled, amazed and furious, was hustled through the crowd to see his shop guarded by the police, and the mob of Muirtown clamouring for tea and whisky at his hand, while face to face with him stood London John . . . bearing on his back and breast the seductive advertisement.

The enraged Bailie lost all self-control as he read the legend on the board.

"It's a brazen lie! A low, mean, dirty trick, a deliberately planned fraud. It's perfectly iniquitous, in fact, juist—juist damnable! Bankrupt—who is bankrupt? Is't me? Tea at elevenpence-halfpenny! I never had such trash in my shop. Three shillings is the lowest, and I never recommend it. Whisky! There is not a drop in the shop. Who hired ye to carry round the board, ye pitiful creature? If ye don't tell the truth I'll commit ye to gaol this very minute."

London John was greatly flattered by his own prominent position and not at all concerned about the Bailie's threat. "It was a big stout man like yirsel', Bailie, that gied me the boards and a shilling, or, noo that I think about it, he was a little man, and thin about the neck. Dod! I'm no very sure, though, but that it was a woman wi' a red face and a shepherd's tartan plaid; at ony rate, if it wasna her it micht be a bit lassie wi' bare head and feet; and I'm thinkin' noo, Bailie, it was a bit lassie, for she said to me, 'Have ye ever been in London?' Noo, Bailie, I would like to tell ye about London."

And if the police had not silenced London John, the Bailie would have had a fit of apoplexy, for it was evident

that there was no getting to the real person behind London John

The crowd had listened with considerable patience and self-restraint to this conversation, but as soon as the hope of tea and refreshment died away, and they realized that some one had fooled them, they looked out for a victim, and settled upon the Bailie

And Tinkler Tam, standing out from among the crowd, addressed him as if from the bench

"Ye should be ashamed of yourself It's a fine business to be playing tricks on the poor folk o' Muirtown, wlin' them from their work to waste their time at your shop-door and sendin' them awa' empty-handed. If it had been the first o' April, and ye had been a laddie, I wudna hev said much about it, but at your age, and you a magistrate, to play sic a trick, it's perfectly disgraceful. You ought to get a month's hard labour."

Then the crowd united in three long groans, and might possibly have shown their indignation in a still more pronounced form, but the police being further reinforced, drove them along the streets, while the Bailie hid himself in the recesses of his shop

He never intimated that he suspected who was behind the hoax, but the offensive patrol was withdrawn and the Seminary resumed possession of the debatable ground

DRAMA

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY RECEIVES A CALLER

from

The Second Mrs Tanqueray

By SIR ARTHUR W PINERO

THE scene which is here presented requires many of the finest and most subtle attributes of the actor's art. Do not be deceived by its apparent easiness. It will tax the powers of the best student among you to give a convincing rendering of the three main characters.

The Second Mrs Tanqueray is the most famous play of its period, i.e. the late nineteenth century. It was the first serious attempt by a modern English playwright to deal with an oft-discussed social problem. The play depicts the attempt of an idealistic, middle-aged man to restore by marriage the social position of a woman whose reputation has been soiled. Aubrey Tanqueray is a widower of forty-two, "handsome and winning in manner."

Paula, the Second Mrs. Tanqueray, "is a young woman of about twenty-seven, beautiful, fresh, innocent-looking."

Speaking of her to his friend, Cayley Drummle, Aubrey Tanqueray says "She has never met a man who has treated her well—I intend to treat her well. That's all. And in a few years . . . I'll prove to you that it's possible to rear a life of happiness, of good repute, on a ——— miserable foundation."

He has a daughter, aged about nineteen . . . "She professes to have found her true vocation in a religious life," and is expected within a month or two to take final vows. But on the eve of her father's marriage, Ellean announces that she does not feel fitted for the life of a nun, and that

she has decided to come home and be her father's companion

At the time of the incidents enacted in the part of the play which follows, Mr and Mrs Tanqueray have been married several months and are living in the country. None of the local gentry have so far acknowledged the presence of the second Mrs Tanqueray. They all keep coldly aloof. Paula is getting bored with the unvarying round of the dull rural existence, with only Aubrey and Ellean for society. Ellean treats her stepmother with politeness but has no affection for her—in fact, distrusts her and is indirectly the cause of the eventual tragedy.

THE SCENE is from the SECOND ACT

A MORNING ROOM in AUBREY TANQUERAY'S HOUSE IN SURREY. It is morning in early spring, and the sun is streaming in through the windows.

[ELLEAN enters from the hall with MRS CORTELYON, a handsome, good-humoured, spirited woman of about forty-five.]

ELLEAN. Papa——

MRS. CORTELYON: (*To AUBREY, shaking hands with him heartily*) Well, Aubrey, how are you? I've just been telling this great girl of yours that I knew her when she was a sad-faced, pale baby. How is Mrs. Tanqueray? I have been a bad neighbour, and I'm here to beg forgiveness. Is she indoors?

AUBREY. She's upstairs putting on a hat, I believe.

MRS. CORTELYON (*Sitting comfortably*) Ah! (*She looks round. DRUMMLE and ELLEAN are talking together in the hall. DRUMMLE is an old friend of AUBREY's. He has "arranged" this meeting*) We used to be very frank with each other, Aubrey. I suppose the old footing is no longer possible, eh?

AUBREY. If so, I'm not entirely to blame, Mrs. Cortelyon.

MRS. CORTELYON. Mrs. Cortelyon? H'm! No, I admit it. But you must make some little allowance for me,

Mr Tanqueray Your first wife and I, as girls, were like two cherries on one stalk, and then I was the confidential friend of your married life. That post, perhaps, wasn't altogether a sinecure. And now—well, when a woman gets to my age I suppose she's a stupid, prejudiced, conventional creature. However, I've got over it and (*giving him her hand*) I hope you'll be enormously happy and let me be a friend once more.

AUBREY Thank you, Alice.

MRS CORTELYON That's right. I feel more cheerful than I've done for weeks. But I suppose it would serve me right if the second Mrs Tanqueray showed me the door. Do you think she will?

AUBREY (*listening*) Here is my wife.

[*MRS CORTELYON rises, and PAULA enters, dressed for driving, she stops abruptly on seeing MRS CORTELYON*]

AUBREY Paula dear, Mrs Cortelyon has called to see you.

[*PAULA starts, looks at MRS CORTELYON irresolutely, then after a slight pause barely touches MRS CORTELYON'S extended hand*]

PAULA (*whose manner now alternates between deliberate insolence and assumed sweetness*) Mrs ——? What name, Aubrey?

AUBREY Mrs. Cortelyon.

PAULA Cortelyon? Oh, yes, Cortelyon.

MRS CORTELYON (*carefully guarding herself throughout against any expression of resentment*) Aubrey ought to have told you that Alice Cortelyon and he are very old friends.

PAULA Oh, very likely he has mentioned the circumstance. I have quite a wretched memory.

MRS CORTELYON You know we are neighbours, Mrs Tanqueray.

PAULA Neighbours? Are we really? Won't you sit down? (*They both sit*) Neighbours! That's most interesting!

MRS CORTELYON Very near neighbours. You can see my roof from your windows.

PAULA I fancy I *have* observed a roof But you have been away from home; you have only just returned

MRS CORTELYON · I? What makes you think that?

PAULA Why, because it is two months since we came to Highercoombe, and I don't remember your having called.

MRS. CORTELYON Your memory is now terribly accurate No, I've not been away from home, and it is to explain my neglect that I am here, rather unceremoniously, this morning

PAULA Oh, to explain—quite so (*With mock solicitude.*) Ah, you've been very ill, I ought to have seen that before.

MRS. CORTELYON: Ill!

PAULA · You look dreadfully pulled down We poor women show illness so plainly in our faces, don't we?

AUBREY (*anxiously*): Paula dear, Mrs Cortelyon is the picture of health

MRS. CORTELYON (*with some asperity*): I have never felt better in my life

PAULA (*looking round innocently*). Have I said anything awkward? Aubrey, tell Mrs Cortelyon how stupid and thoughtless I always am!

MRS. CORTELYON (*to DRUMMLE, who is now standing close to her*) Really, Cayley— (*He soothes her with a nod and smile and a motion of his finger to his lip*) Mrs Tanqueray, I am afraid my explanation will not be quite so satisfactory as either of those you have just helped me to You may have heard—but, if you have heard, you have doubtless forgotten—that twenty years ago, when your husband first lived here, I was a constant visitor at Highercoombe

PAULA Twenty years ago—fancy I was a naughty little child then

MRS CORTELYON Possibly Well, at that time, and till the end of her life, my affections were centred upon the lady of this house.

PAULA Were they? That was very sweet of you

[ELLEAN *approaches* MRS CORTELYON, *listening intently to her*]

MRS CORTELYON I will say no more on that score, but I must add this when, two months ago, you came here, I realised, perhaps for the first time, that I was a middle-aged woman, and that it had become impossible for me to accept without some effort a breaking-in upon many tender associations. There, Mrs Tanqueray, that is my confession. Will you try to understand it and pardon me?

PAULA (*watching ELLEAN,—sneeringly*): Ellean dear, you appear to be very interested in Mrs. Cortelyon's reminiscences; I don't think I can do better than make you my mouthpiece—there is such sympathy between us What do you say—can we bring ourselves to forgive Mrs Cortelyon for neglecting us for two weary months?

MRS CORTELYON (*to ELLEAN, pleasantly*) Well, Ellean? (*With a little cry of tenderness ELLEAN impulsively sits beside MRS CORTELYON and takes her hand*) My dear child!

PAULA (*in an undertone to AUBREY*) Ellean isn't so very slow in taking to Mrs Cortelyon!

MRS CORTELYON (*to PAULA and AUBREY*) Come, this encourages me to broach my scheme. Mrs Tanqueray, it strikes me that you two good people are just now excellent company for each other, while Ellean would perhaps be glad of a little peep into the world you are anxious to avoid Now, I'm going to Paris tomorrow for a week or two before settling down in Chester Square, so—don't gasp, both of you!—if this girl is willing, and you have made no other arrangements for her, will you let her come with me to Paris, and afterwards remain with me in town during the Season?

[ELLEAN *utters an exclamation of surprise*]

[PAULA *is silent*]

What do you say?

AUBREY Paula—Paula, dear (*Hesitatingly*) My dear Mrs. Cortelyon, this is wonderfully kind of you; I am really at a loss to—eh, Cayley?

DRUMMLE (*watching PAULA apprehensively*) Kind! Now I must say I don't think so! I begged Alice to take me to Paris, and she declined I am thrown over for Ellean Ha, ha!

MRS CORTELYON (*laughing*) What nonsense you talk, Cayley

[*The LAUGHTER dies out*]

[*PAULA remains quite still*]

AUBREY Paula dear.

PAULA (*slowly collecting herself*) One moment I—I don't quite—(*to MRS CORTELYON*) You propose that Ellean leaves Highercoombe almost at once and remains with you some months?

MRS CORTELYON It would be a mercy to me You can afford to be generous to a desolate old widow Come, Mrs Tanqueray, won't you spare her?

PAULA Won't I spare her. (*Suspiciously*) Have you mentioned your plan to Aubrey—before I came in?

MRS CORTELYON No, I had no opportunity

PAULA Nor to Ellean?

MRS CORTELYON Oh, no

PAULA (*looking about her, in suppressed excitement*). This hasn't been discussed at all, behind my back?

MRS CORTELYON My dear Mrs. Tanqueray!

PAULA Ellean, let us hear your voice in the matter!

ELLEAN I should like to go with Mrs Cortelyon—

PAULA Ah!

ELLEAN. That is, if—if—

PAULA If—if what?

ELLEAN (*looking towards AUBREY, appealingly*) Papa

PAULA (*in a hard voice*) Oh, of course—I forgot (*To AUBREY.*) My dear Aubrey, it rests with you, naturally, whether I am—to lose—Ellean

AUBREY Lose Ellean? (*Advancing to PAULA*) There is no question of losing Ellean You would see Ellean

in town constantly when she returned from Paris, isn't that so, Mrs Cortelyon?

MRS. CORTELYON Certainly

PAULA (*laughing softly*) Oh, I didn't know I should be allowed that privilege.

MRS CORTELYON Privilege, my dear Mrs Tanqueray!

PAULA Ha, ha! That makes all the difference, doesn't it?

AUBREY (*with assumed gaiety*) All the difference? I should think so! (*To ELLEAN, laying his hand upon her head, tenderly*) And you are quite certain you wish to see what the world is like on the other side of Black Moor?

ELLEAN If you are willing, papa, I am quite certain

AUBREY (*looking at PAULA, irresolutely, then speaking with an effort*) Then I—I am willing

PAULA (*rising and striking the table lightly with her clenched hand*) That decides it!

[*There is a general movement*]

(*Excitedly to MRS CORTELYON, who advances towards her*) When do you want her?

MRS CORTELYON We go to town this afternoon at five o'clock, and sleep to-night at Bayliss's There is barely time for her to make her preparations.

PAULA I will undertake that she is ready

MRS CORTELYON I've a great deal to scramble through at home, too, as you may guess Good-bye!

PAULA (*turning away*) Mrs Cortelyon is going

[*PAULA stands looking out of the window, with her back to those in the room*]

MRS CORTELYON (*to DRUMMLE*) Cayley——

DRUMMLE (*to her*) Eh?

MRS CORTELYON I've gone through it, for the sake of Aubrey and his child but I—I feel a hundred Is that a mad-woman?

DRUMMLE Of course, all jealous women are mad

[*He goes out with AUBREY.*]

MRS CORTELYON (*hesitatingly, to PAULA*) Good-bye, Mrs Tanqueray.

[*PAULA inclines her head with the slightest possible movement, then resumes her former position ELLEAN comes from the hall and takes MRS CORTELYON out of the room After a brief silence PAULA turns with a fierce cry and hurriedly takes off her coat and hat and tosses them upon the settee*]

PAULA Oh! Oh! Oh! (*She drops into the chair as AUBREY returns he stands looking at her*)

Who's that?

AUBREY I You have altered your mind about going out?

PAULA Yes Please to ring the bell

AUBREY (*touching the bell*): You are angry about Mrs. Cortelyon and Ellean Let me try to explain my reasons——

PAULA Be careful what you say to me just now! I have never felt like this—except once—in my life Be careful what you say to me!

[*A SERVANT enters*]

(*Rising*) Is Watts at the door with the cart?

SERVANT. Yes, ma'am

PAULA Tell him to drive to the post-office directly, with this. (*Picking up the letter which has been lying upon the table*)

AUBREY: With that?

PAULA Yes My letter to Lady Orreyed (*Giving the letter to the SERVANT, who goes out*)

AUBREY: Surely you don't wish me to countermand any orders of yours to a servant? Call the man back—take the letter from him!

PAULA I have not the slightest intention of doing so

AUBREY: I must then (*Going to the door*)

[*She snatches up her hat and coat and follows him*]

What are you going to do?

PAULA If you stop that letter, walk out of the house
[*He hesitates, then leaves the door.*]

AUBREY I am right in believing that to be the letter inviting George Orreyed and his wife to stay here, am I not?

PAULA. Oh yes—quite right

AUBREY Let it go I'll write to him by-and-by

PAULA (*facing him*) You dare!

AUBREY Hush, Paula!

PAULA. Insult me again and, upon my word, I'll go straight out of the house!

AUBREY. Insult you?

PAULA Insult me! What else is it? My God! what else is it? What do you mean by taking Ellean from me?

AUBREY. Listen——!

PAULA Listen to *me*! And how do you take her? You pack her off in the care of a woman who has deliberately held aloof from me, who's thrown mud at me! Yet this Cortelyon creature has only to put foot here once to be entrusted with the charge of the girl you know I dearly want to keep near me!

AUBREY: Paula dear! hear me——!

PAULA Ah! of course, of course! I can't be so useful to your daughter as such people as this; and so I'm to be given the go-by for any town friend of yours who turns up and chooses to patronise us! Hah! Very well, at any rate, as you take Ellean from me you justify my looking for companions where I can most readily find 'em

AUBREY. You wish me to fully appreciate your reason for sending that letter to Lady Orreyed?

PAULA. Precisely—I do

AUBREY: And could you, after all, go back to associates of that order? It's not possible!

PAULA (*mockingly*) What, not after the refining influence of these intensely respectable surroundings? (*Going to the door.*) We'll see!

AUBREY. Paula!

PAULA (*violently*). We'll see!

[*She goes out*
He stands still, looking after her]

COMMENTS

It is almost an impertinence to offer any comments when you have Sir Arthur Pinero's own words and his intimate stage directions plain before you. I have seen three Paulas. Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who played the part in the original production, Miss Olga Nethersole, and Miss Irene Rooke. In the scene we are studying I can only recall, with clearness, Mrs. Patrick Campbell's acting. Her manner of treating Mrs. Cortelyon was just the perfect exhibition of "deliberate insolence and assumed sweetness," which the author asks for. I was really sorry for Mrs. Cortelyon, which is artistically one part of the effect Paula's treatment should have upon the audience. Mrs. Campbell's great acting threw into relief Paula's sense of injury, and, in so doing, made the spectators share the pain both women were feeling.

I ask anyone who attempts this scene to bear that effect in mind. It is easy to vulgarize Paula's manner. But while she is something less than a real gentlewoman, she is too clever and wise to show *actual* commonness. The French proverb may be borne in mind in speaking Paula's lines to Mrs. Cortelyon: "Revenge is a dish which must be eaten cool to be enjoyed."

As to Paula's manner after Mrs. Cortelyon's exit, the danger to be avoided is the verging upon melodrama. Anger sweeps her along—intense, warm—but the tones should never *sound* louder than might be appropriate to a room. And that is a secret which certain of the greater actors of the past generation had the key. They could speak in a big theatre and convey the illusion that they were only speaking naturally in a room. Sir John Hare, for instance, never seemed to raise his voice beyond a conversational tone but every word travelled the full length of the theatre. Sir Charles Wyndham had the same power, so had Courtenay Thorpe. How did they learn the secret? Well, for one thing they all took pains, great

pains, with their speaking For Courtenay Thorpe, I can vouch that he studied Elocution for years So many actors to-day get the conversational tones all right but their tones do not carry beyond the stalls

If you are able to approximate to a measure of rightness for Paula's voice you will probably succeed in getting Mrs Cortelyon's by the effect of reaction For Aubrey, the tones must, of course, be fairly deep, level, and very restrained, even when Paula's are throbbing with anger.

The Closing Scene from
"PAOLO AND FRANCESCA"

By STEPHEN PHILLIPS

IN "*Paolo and Francesca*, a tragedy in four acts by Stephen Phillips," we have a setting of one of the world's great love stories. Its main theme is the eternal problem—

"——who shall set a shore to love?
When hath it swerved from death, or when
Hath it not burned away all barriers,
Even dearest ties of mother and of son,
Even of brothers?"

With this is illustrated another elemental urge "Youth will turn to youth."

Giovanni Malatesta (called "The Lame"), Tyrant of Rimini, marries Francesca, fresh from the convent. Paolo, his brother (called "The Beautiful"), has been sent by Giovanni to bring her to the wedding. Paolo and Francesca fall in love. Paolo tries to flee from the terrible temptation by taking active service in the wars. In vain!

"I have fled from her, I have refused the rose,
Although my brain was reeling at the scent.
I have come hither as through pains of death;
I have died, and I am gazing back at life

thrilling from Rimini,
A tender voice makes all the trumpets mute
I cannot go from her."

Lucrezia, cousin to Giovanni, arouses his suspicion about Paolo and Francesca. Later, because of the pity awakened in her by Francesca's helplessness, Lucrezia tries to avert the tragedy. It is too late. Paolo returns and

goes to Francesca. Giovanni, thought to be away, is hiding. He discovers the lovers and kills both.

This is not the place for any detailed appreciation of "this thing of exquisite poetic form" (to quote William Archer), nor for argument upon its merits or demerits. It is a fruitless quest to account for the shifting sands of criticism. The saying is: "The critics have always been wrong." Well then, if they were wrong at the end of the nineteenth century, when they compared Stephen Phillips to Milton, Marlowe, Tennyson, and Landor, they are just as likely to be wrong to-day who deride his merits.

Professor Churton Collins said of *Paolo and Francesca*: "It unquestionably places Mr. Phillips in the first rank of modern dramatists and of modern poetry. It does more, it claims his kinship with the aristocrats of his art: with Sophocles and with Dante."

And it is not likely that Sir Owen Seaman would wish to retract his verdict given upon the first appearance of the play. "A great dramatic poem which happens also to be a great poetic drama. We are justified in speaking of Mr. Phillips's achievement as something without parallel in our age."

These men must be accounted as competent to judge, and sincere in their praise. They were certainly more likely to be correct in their opinion than is the well-known poetess who recently referred to Phillips as "a bad poet."

But there is one quality in Stephen Phillips's poetry of which only actors are really competent to judge. Any actor will agree that the lines "speak well," that the sentences flow as to music, and that they create for the hearer pictures which are beautiful and true.

I have loved this play well enough to memorize almost every word, and I have found more than one audience of educated people glad to listen to it. If you will show some proportionate measure of effort, and master even this one scene, you also will find some grateful listeners.

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

A Selection from Act Four

A CHAMBER IN THE PALACE

[FRANCESCA is alone Enter PAOLO]

- PAO I am by music led into this room,
And beckoned sweetly · all the breezes die
Round me, and in immortal ecstasy
Toward thee I move now am I free and gay—
Light as a dancer when the strings begin
- FRANC What glow is on thy face, what sudden light?
- PAO It seems that I am proof against all perils
- FRANC And yet I fear to see thy air so glad
- PAO To-night all points of swords to me are dull.
- FRANC And still I dread the bravery of your words
Kiss me, and leave me, Paolo, to-night.
- PAO What do you fear?
- FRANC One watches quietly
- PAO Who?
- FRANC I know not perhaps the quiet face
Of God : the eternal Listener is near.
- PAO. I'll struggle now no more Have I not fought
Against thee as a foe most terrible?
Parried the numble thrust and thought of thee,
And from thy mortal sweetness fled away,
Yet evermore returned? Now all the bonds
Which held me I cast off—honour, esteem,
All ties, all friendships, peace, and life itself,
You only in this universe I want
- FRANC You fill me with a glorious rashness. What!
Shall we two, then, take up our fate and smile?
- PAO. Remember how when first we met we stood
Stung with immortal recollections
O face immured beside a fairy sea,
That leaned down at dead midnight to be
kissed !

O beauty folded up in forests old !
 Thou wast the lovely quest of Arthur's
 knights—

FRANC Thy armour glimmered in a gloom of green

PAO Did I not sing to thee in Babylon ?

FRANC Or did we set a sail in Carthage bay ?

PAO Were thine eyes strange ?

FRANC Did I not know thy voice ?

All ghostly grew the sun, unreal the air
 Then when we kissed.

PAO And in that kiss our souls
 Together flashed, and now they are one flame,
 Which nothing can put out, nothing divide.

FRANC Kiss me again ! I smile at what may chance

PAO Again, and yet again ! and here and here
 Let me with kisses burn this body away,
 That our two souls may dart together free
 I fret at intervention of the flesh,
 And I would clasp you—you that but inhabit
 This lovely house

FRANC Break open then the door.
 And let my spirit out Paolo, kill me !
 Then kill thyself to vengeance leave these
 weeds,

And let our souls together soar away
 PAO (*Recoiling*) You are too beautiful for human
 blow !

[FRANCESCA starts]

Why did you shiver and turn sudden cold ?

FRANC (*Slowly*) I felt a wind pass over me.

PAO I too

Colder than any summer night could give

FRANC A solitary wind : and it hath passed.

PAO (*Embracing her*) Do you still fear ?

FRANC Ah, Paolo ! if we
 Should die to-night, then whither would our
 souls

Repair ? There is a region which priests tell of
 Where such as we are punished without end

PAO Were we together, what can punish us?

FRANC. . Nothing! Ah! think not I can love you less—
Only I fear

PAO What can we fear, we two?

O God, Thou seest us Thy creatures bound
Together by that law which holds the stars
In palpitating cosmic passion bright;
By which the very sun enthrals the earth,
And all the waves of the world faint to the moon
Even by such attraction we two rush
Together through the everlasting years
Us, then, whose only pain can be to part,
How wilt Thou punish? For what ecstasy
Together to be blown about the globe!
What rapture in perpetual fire to burn
Together!—where we are is endless fire.
There centuries shall in a moment pass,
And all the cycles in one hour elapse!
Still, still together, even when faints Thy sun,
And past our souls Thy stars like ashes fall,
How wilt Thou punish us who cannot part?

FRANC. I lie out on your arms and say your name—
“Paolo!” “Paolo!”

PAO “Francesca”

[*They slowly move through the curtains A pause*]

[*Then the maid NITA enters, and concludes that her mistress and PAOLO have gone out through the window. NITA complains that her own love-making has had to be interrupted*]

Now Lucrezia enters hurriedly in agony at being unable to find Giovanni. Learns from Nita that Francesca and Paolo are together, she knows not where. THE DOOR IS FOUND TO BE FAST The two women gaze with blank faces at the great curtains before the door, which seem to tremble Lucrezia and Nita stand frozen with terror as a hand appears between the curtains: they are slowly parted and Giovanni comes slowly through. Nita goes

out There is a pause during which Giovanni and Lucrezia gaze at each other

LUC (*Going slowly up to him*) O, Sir!
I would beseech of you— (*She starts*). Ah!
Giovanni,

You have hurt your hand · there's blood upon
it here

(*Takes his hand and looks at it*)

GIO 'Tis not *my* blood!

LUC O, then——

GIO "O, then!" is all.

(*As in a frenzy*)

And now their love that was so secret close

Shall be proclaimed Tullio, Carlo, Biagi!

They shall be married before all men Nita!

Rouse up the house and bring in lights, lights,
lights!

There shall be music, feasting, and dancing

Wine shall be drunk Candles, I say! More
lights!

More marriage lights! Where tarry they the
while,

The nuptial tapers? Rouse up all the house!

[*All this while SERVANTS and others, half dressed,
are continually rushing in with lights and torches
They stand whispering*]

GIO. (*Slowly*)

Carlo, go through the curtains, and pass in

To the great sleeping-chamber you shall find

Two there together lying place them, then,

Upon some litter and have them hither brought
With ceremony

[*Exeunt Servants*]

[*GIOVANNI paces to and fro*]

The curse, the curse of Cain!

A restlessness has come into my blood,

And I begin to wander from this hour

Alone for evermore

LUC (*Rushing to him*)

Giovanni, say

Quickly some light thing, lest we both go mad!

GIO. Be still! A second wedding here begins,
And I would have all reverent and seemly
For they were nobly born, and deep in love

[*Enter blind ANGELA, slowly*]

ANGELA Will no one take my hand? Two lately dead
Rushed past me in the air O! are there not
Many within this room all standing still?
What are they all expecting?

GIO Lead her aside
I hear the slow pace of advancing feet

[*Enter Servants bearing PAOLO and FRANCESCA
dead upon a litter*]

LUC Ah! Ah! Ah!

GIO Break not out in lamentation!

[*A pause The Servants set down the litter*]

LUC (*Going to litter*)

I have borne one child, and she has died in
youth!

GIO (*Going to litter*)

Not easily have we three come to this—
We three who now are dead Unwillingly
They loved, unwillingly I slew them Now
I kiss them on the forehead quietly.

[*He bends over the bodies and kisses them on the
forehead He is shaken*]

LUC. What ails you now?

She takes away my strength
I did not know the dead could have such hair
Hide them They look like children fast
asleep!

[*The bodies are reverently covered over.*]

Note. The pronunciation of Paolo is approximately *Powlo*, and of
Francesca, *Francheska*

ORIGINAL STUDIES OF
CHARACTER

HE WANTED TO BE AN ACTOR

A TRAGI-COMEDY OF YOUTH

by

JAMES BERNARD

Introducing the following characters

ROWLAND, a boy of thirteen

ROWLAND'S FATHER

SHERIDAN MUSGRAVE, an old actor

AN UNNAMED WORKMAN

HERE is the adventure of Rowland, a stage-struck boy, thirty years ago. A travelling theatre has been in the vicinity for several weeks and Rowland has become enamoured of the seemingly romantic lives of the actors. On the last night of their visit he goes to the theatre and sees *Othello*. It is very late when he gets home and his father is angry and gives him a severe beating. There have been other troubles, and the boy, unhappy at home, "and bursting with undefined longings," determines to run away and try to join the actors. So early next morning he starts off to follow them to Caterham, about twelve miles away. Now the boy's usual routine on rising is to don an exceedingly old suit to do one or two odd jobs in—lighting fires and cleaning boots—and, later on to change into a more presentable suit for school. This morning, being agitated and naturally in a hurry, he leaves home in his old and rather disreputable clothes.

Imagine first, the interior of a wayside inn, some hours later in the morning. An old weatherbeaten actor, whose face shows signs of recent damage, is taking refreshment, meanwhile looking hard at the boy, whose refined face and speech are in marked contrast with his stained and shabby attire.

"Your face is somehow familiar, boy Where have we met? Why, are you not the boy I've noticed so often being about our show at Catford? Ye-es, of course you are! But what's the matter? You look different Something wrong?"

"Please sir, I've run away. I want to be an actor Will you let me come with you? I'll work very hard "

No temperament has so much of the real child in it as the actor's. Sheridan Musgrave, hard-bitten Thespian, for all his forty years' contact with the sordid realities of the profession of Make Believe, had never quite lost the radiance of the Golden Age The chronic frown of his deeply lined face faded and his eyes grew tenderly grave He shook his head slowly

"Ah! Now I think of it, I remember what I saw in your face the other day I said to myself, 'That youngster's got stage fever' I'm not surprised you want to go on the stage But it can't be done this way No how! Why, I took you for a gentleman's son. You are, aren't you? You don't speak like a common boy "

Rowland's courage was declining. Two big tears overflowed. Mr Musgrave patted the boy's head kindly.

"Let me look at you again Why, you're an uncommon good-looking boy, but your eyes are too sad. Not happy at home, eh?"

"Not very, sir My father gets vexed with me so often "

"Why?"

"He says I am a dreamer "

"A dreamer, eh! Well, the stage ain't much of a place for a dreamer, I can tell you "

"But I'd work ever so hard at acting, sir "

"What's your mother say?"

"My mother is dead, sir. I've got a step-mother "

"Ah! I see. Don't you get on with her like?"

"Not very well, sir "

"Hmmm! You're—how old? Fifteen?"

"No, sir. I'm nearly thirteen "

"Good gracious! Fine boy for that age! Took you for

about fifteen. Ah! Your father'll be clever, I reckon? Highly educated?"

"Oh! yes, sir He is awfully clever "

"Don't he approve of theatres then?"

"I don't think he minds much, sir He was angry with me last night for being so late home I went to the theatre last night, sir "

"Did you now? You saw the show! Let me see! What *did* we play last night?"

"*Othello*, sir."

"Ah! yes. We did *The Moor* I played *Iago* What did you think of it?"

"Fine, sir I thought you splendid when you made *Othello* jealous "

"Ye-es I'm always strong in that sort of part Ever see me play the Strangler in *The Crimes of Paris*? Well, that is one of my really great parts Hmmm! Did you think much of the Moor? Chap that did *Othello*! Oh! You liked him, did you? Oh, he's not *really* bad It's not my idea of the part Ah! but you liked *Iago* all right, did you? Wait till you see my Strangler! Yes, the stage's all right when you've got some lines to stick your teeth in and a decent house to play to But your idea of going on, my boy, is far too early, and this ain't the way to go about it Mind you! the stage is a fine profession. I wouldn't be anything but an actor if I had to do my time over again But things are altering Time was when a show like mine would fill the house anywhere Why, when I started this company of mine a good honest melodrama with three or four healthy murders, and a bit of clog dancing, or a sentimental song, done with changing lights, to finish up with, would satisfy everybody The country folk would drive in ten miles to see us do *The Flowers of the Forest* or *Sweeney Todd* It takes more than we can do to bring 'em in now Ye-es, and then so long as a chap could get the words off his chest and chuck it at 'em, you know, an aitch or two or a slip of grammar didn't matter. But it's education an actor needs nowadays Now, you're a nice, smart boy, and you've been of use to me this

morning, when the old mare bolted and knocked me off the perch. Quite fortunate you were about to help pick me up, and thank God I'm no worse hurt than I am! But it won't do, no how, for you to think of joining my show. Not at your age. This bit of a dust-up you've had with your dad mustn't stop you finishing your education proper. Why, bless me! What would your father say to me, if, supposing I wanted a boy, which I don't, I was to take you along of me. He'd have me locked up, maybe, for enticing you away."

Rowland felt desolate. It was all he could do to keep back the tears. It seemed useless to argue.

"I wish you would let me come, sir."

"Now, here's my straight tip. If you mean to get on the boards, keep the idea before you. You're too young by fully two years to start yet. And listen here, old son, and take an old man's word for it. What you have to put up with at home is simply nothing to what you'd suffer on the road at your time of life. Now, eat your bread and cheese and get that milk down you. Here's a tanner for your help. Make the best of your way back home. I bet your dad's pretty anxious by now about you and maybe he'll not be so hard on you when he sees how upset you've been. And see here, all being well, I'll be round your way some time next year. Come in and see me then and we'll have another talk. Cheer up! All may yet be well! Come, lead old Sally out into the road and give me a leg up. There, my blessing with you!"

Very sadly Rowland watched the going of the honest old man, mounted upon the light cart behind the now docile mare. He looked at the sixpence Mr. Musgrave had given him. It seemed a good deal of money. To return home was too much for his pride and spirit yet. He walked back to where a sign-post notified that it was eight miles to Putney Bridge. So, again taking the road, he trudged on. Mr. Musgrave had told him he looked fifteen. Perhaps he could get a place in London. His courage rose. He whistled a tune.

Just after midnight Rowland crept wearily into the goods-yard of a railway station near London Bridge. Earlier in the night he had noticed the empty vans lined up there and had decided to try to spend the night in one. He was famishing and exhausted with fruitless wanderings and visits to stage doors. Like many an older aspirant he had found such places as walled cities. On the one or two occasions he had mustered courage to ask if a boy was wanted he had met with curt negatives.

He chose a van and climbed in. Almost immediately two lads about his own age loomed out of the darkness and joined him.

"It's all right, matey," came a strong whisper, "don't make a noise. Snuggle darn, Billy."

"I'm all right, Teddy," said another whisperer.

There was some straw on the cart floor. Rowland lay down in one corner. The two lads curled themselves into each other's arms. Rowland had just dozed off when the cart rang with loud yells and howls of pain. Heavy blows were falling on the writhing forms next to him. Then he felt a long line of pain upon his legs and back. A savage voice roared, "Lay on to the vermin, Dick! I said I'd cop 'em to-night!"

Rowland struggled to the front of the cart. Two burly fellows stood on the foot-boards. Each held a heavy whip.

"Please, sir, I'm sorry. I was so tired."

One of the brutes struck him fiercely with the thick end of his whip. "I'll show yer!" With a shriek of agony Rowland rolled off the cart between the shafts. He fled moaning with pain and terror. Sobbing and limping, daring not to stop until he had gone a good distance, he sat down at last upon a warehouse step. He had lost his cap and his body stung all over.

Vigorous footsteps approached from the opposite way to the goods-yard. A short, thick-set man, carrying a workman's basket, came into view. He stopped, looked sharply at the boy, upon whose bare head a ray of light fell from a street-lamp.

"What's up?"

"Please, sir, I was trying to sleep in a railway cart and the men beat me and drove me away"

"What d'you want to sleep in a cart for? How come you to be out so late?"

"I've run away from home"

The man drew Rowland nearer to the light and keenly searched his face

"Hey! You're no street boy Have you been up to mischief that's made you run away?"

Rowland tried to explain. The man shook his head like Mr. Musgrave had done that morning.

"Phew! You're on the wrong track. These streets are no place for the likes of you See here, now! Anything that can happen to you at home is nothing to the harm that may easily come to a lad like you alone at night in this city It's all right fighting against tyranny and wrong in high places That's what I'm doing in my way But you can't fight things by running away from 'em Why, if one of the bad sort of men who prowls round these streets at night had met you, you might have been ruined body and soul Now, if I pay for a bed for you at a lodging-house, will you promise to go back home in the morning?"

"Yes, sir"

"Come along then. Hungry?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, here's a bit of my breakfast" He undid his basket

"Oh no, sir, I won't take your breakfast"

"Never mind about that I can get some more Here, catch hold"

Munching bread and bacon, Rowland limped alongside of his friend

"Why you're lame!"

"Not really, sir But the men over there hit me on the leg with a whip"

"Poor kid! Well, you'd catch your death a night like this."

Soon they came within sight of a red lamp bearing the sign "GOOD BEDS, 4d, 6d, 1/-"

"Now then, this'll serve your turn for to-night. It's respectable all right "

An open doorway showed a long passage At one side was a little office where sat a man in a peaked cap

"Here, deputy, give this shaver a bed, and a cup of tea and a doorstep in the morning "

In return for sixpence "deputy" handed Rowland a metal disc and said "Number 48 up two flights "

"Now, boy," said the benefactor, in a lower tone, "get off to sleep and trot back home in the morning Mind what I've told you Shake hands Good-bye! God bless you!"

"Good-bye, sir Thank you, very much indeed "

Rowland's bed was one of about twenty others in a long room and nearly all were occupied The air was foul and loud with many breathers Sleep came only in fits and starts to the overwrought boy until nearly dawn, when he slumbered peacefully

About ten o'clock next morning Rowland had wandered into Charing Cross Station and was rather mournfully watching the streams of passengers He felt a touch upon the shoulder. A pleasant-looking gentleman with much black braid on his clothes was standing by him He looked and spoke kindly

"What is your name?"

Rowland told him

"That's all right Come along with me "

He led the boy into a little room marked "Private" and went to a speaking tube and said something which Rowland could not hear. Then, in a louder tone "Yes, I've got him here. Send in an officer Oh! No, no! Plain clothes "

Soon arrived a big, genial man, obviously a policeman in mufti, who, after receiving instructions from the braided gentleman, grinned at Rowland and said. "Come along, old man "

Within an hour Rowland was in his own little bed and fast asleep It was early afternoon when he awoke and saw his father sitting beside the bed His father looked

grave but there was a suggestion of a smile on his face. Rowland was somewhat apprehensive as to what was to follow. But he was not the only one who had had an anxious time during the last twenty-four hours. His father said

“So, boy, you meant to leave us. Well, I only want to ask one thing of you. The next time you run away, do please put on your best clothes.”

COMMENT ON "HE WANTED TO BE AN ACTOR"

AN extract from this is given as an illustration on the regulation of Pitch, in *Twenty-four Lessons in Elocution*.

I once gave the whole story over the Wireless. The four voices needed will supply exercise for that most desirable thing in the speaking voice, pliability without straining. Whatever character you are impersonating never force your voice out of its nature. A number of changes can be *suggested* by alternating pitch and rate, but still more by an extended study of Tone-colour. In this sketch the main difficulty will be the boy's voice. Let me reiterate what has often required saying in these studies: careful observation is the best way to achieve a likeness to Nature. For some unaccountable reason nearly everyone who has to characterize a boy's voice tends to adopt a mawkish, or super-angelic tone. Mawkishness may be encountered in a boy once in a very long while, but angelicalness——! The boy in this story is a well-bred little fellow in shabby clothes. His naturally polite speech must be indicated because Mr. Musgrave comments upon it. This should be conveyed, and without undue stress, to contrast with the less cultured voice of the old-time actor. The unnamed workman, who befriends the boy, should be pure Cockney. The boy's father only makes one speech, but as this ends the episode it needs careful attention.

THE QUACK
A DRAMATIC EPISODE
by
JAMES BERNARD

Introducing the following characters

RANDALL GLABRISH	A prosperous quack doctor
FREDERICK HALBERG	His brother-in-law
ADELAIDE	Sister to Glabrish and wife to Halberg

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

RANDALL GLABRISH is the maker and proprietor of a popular cure-all, "Glabrish's Elixir of Life." He is a big, handsome man, about forty

Frederick Halberg is a highly bred, scholarly man about thirty. Formerly a student of medicine, he interrupted his course to become assistant to a wealthy explorer. The unexpected and sudden death of the explorer has caused a reversal of Halberg's prospects. He is now a teacher and occasional writer. Has been married for about two years to Adelaide, Glabrish's favourite sister. She is a beautiful woman of rather prosaic ideals, disappointed with her husband's financial position. The incident takes place at Glabrish's house at Liverpool where the sister and brother-in-law are on a visit. This is the first time Glabrish and Halberg have met. Adelaide has always referred to Glabrish as "My brother, the doctor."

Instinctive antipathy was aroused between Frederick Halberg and Randall Glabrish within five minutes of their meeting.

No amount of purple and fine linen could make the flourishing quack look other than plebeian. Splendid physique, rich voice, broadcloth and diamonds could not hide from Halberg for many minutes that the proprietor

of this extravagantly-furnished house was of a vulgar nature Glabrish, quick-witted, and a naturally good judge of character, realized that this pale, strong-featured man, distinguished-looking in plain, modest clothes, would despise him and his trade

"Why, in the name of all that is sensible, has Adelaide married a proud-stomached swell like this?" was Glabrish's inward comment during the first interview with his brother-in-law

And Halberg's thought was, "Can this over-dressed, self-displaying person really be an eminent physician?"

Randall was a generous host and met his guests with open and hearty welcome. His affection for his sister was unrestrained, but his loudly over-stressed concern at her delicate appearance was embarrassing, and made his brother-in-law wince

On retiring at night, Halberg asked his wife "Of what is your brother a specialist, Adelaide?"

She answered, briding a little: "Oh, I don't really know. He is very clever and cures lots of people. He has a wonderful remedy of his own, and folks come and come every day Oh, Randall is not an ordinary doctor. And see how well he is doing I only wish we had half as nice a house."

"As to the nice house, I agree, at any rate. And he is a liberal host But I don't quite understand about his degrees However, we shall see later on, perhaps"

"Now, please, Frederick, don't go worrying Randall about that He is easily vexed. And he has not been educated like you, of course, but he is largely self-taught He does a lot of good and his medicine goes like wild-fire"

"But how can a doctor be self-taught? If he is a specialist, he must surely have taken degrees"

"Well, he has a degree I know. It is in his surgery, and he must be clever or he wouldn't make the money he does. Oh, please don't begin worrying about Randall I do so want to enjoy this holiday."

"Well, my dear, I cannot see that the cleverness in making money has anything to do with the question I

was somewhat surprised by one or two remarks he made to-night."

Before many more hours, the mighty Glabrish made observations which more than surprised his guest

Randall had been made uneasy more than once, during the evening, by Halberg's casual reference to medical science, but he had carried matters off with boisterous humour

The next night, the brothers-in-law sat in the smoke-room Randall, flushed by his potations, grew garrulous and patronising

"Let's see, Halberg, what *are* you really? An explorer, writer, or something in that line, are you not?"

"Well, doctor," answered the other, seeing an opening, "since you phrase it so, I am 'really something in that line' Do you mind if I put a similar question to you What *are you* really?"

"I am a specialist," said Glabrish brazenly, ready for a row, "in diseases of the blood and liver. My 'Elixir' is my mainstay "

"Your——?"

"Elixir, man. Have you never heard of 'Glabrish's Elixir of Life?'"

"I don't think I have, but I understood you were a physician."

"So I am," and Glabrish tossed off a glassful of wine.

"So I am, and a jolly good one, too. I physic all and sundry, give 'em sound advice and honest mixture."

"Yes, but you of course have a degree?"

"Degree! Yes, and a jolly big one, too! Cost me twenty of the best golden sovereigns that ever came from the Mint, besides a deuced lot of studying—too much, considering the price—twenty pounds, plus the cost of the frame Ho! Ho! I tell you, I am all right! Have a drop more? No! Well, I will, and several more, too Degree! I should think I have," and the "doctor" grew belligerent, and wagged and rolled his head and puffed ferociously at his fat cigar.

"My dear sir, excuse me. I am your guest, and we

should not perhaps be discussing this subject But I studied medicine for several years." (at this, Glabrish started rather uneasily) "and am deeply interested in the science I merely thought to have some little kindred knowledge in matters upon which you, I took it for granted, were an authority Let us drop the subject "

Frederick Halberg spoke with a quiet incisiveness which only enraged the charlatan

"Oh, no! we won't drop it Come here, in this next room. See my surgery " And he led the way, rather unsteadily, to the famous consultation room

"See there, on that wall, there's my Degree, and a handsome one, too!"

Halberg read the huge-framed certificate from the State of X and could not restrain a surprised frown

"Ah, yes I see "

Perhaps it was hardly possible to say less, and the inflection in his voice was no more than a shade cynical He made one or two general remarks about medical formulae and asked for his host's opinion upon the use of ethyl chloride.

They were now back in the smoking room, and the "doctor" grunted—"Well, if it comes to that, I don't worry about these new-fangled things I stick to old-fashioned stuffs. There's nothing to beat 'em Aloes, senna, rhubarb and ginger——"

"Yes, but my dear sir, anaesthetics——"

"I don't deal in 'em Not in my line I am a blood purifier, not a surgeon. My 'Elixir' is plain, wholesome stuff and a jolly fine recipe Here, wait, I'll show you "

Glabrish disappeared into a little apartment branching off the smoke-room, and returned with a bottle of the famous panacea, labelled with an astonishing legend in gold letters on a bright green base and crowned with a mighty crest and the inscription "Spero Meliora "

Frederick Halberg gravely sampled the rich, red liquid. He gave a quick, searching look at the great, bearded, wide-eyed man who now sat opposite, smoking an expensive Havana and drinking unrestrainedly.

"Well," Glabrish cried, with defiant swagger. "I expect you know something of what that's made of And it's all right; good stuff. Only the best material used on these premises"

The guest was reading the label carefully and aloud.

"This wonderful agent has received the sanction of the most eminent medical men' *Eminent medical men!*"

"That's as may be!" laughed the quack, boldly "Have to tell folk a good tale! Do you think I'm going to say it *hasn't*? If it hasn't, it ought to It's done more good than most of the rot *they* sell at four times the price!"

His brother-in-law continued his reading of the gold lettering—"And is admitted to be the most powerful remedy known for the cure of nervous and physical debility, local weakness, pains in the back and premature decline, restoring the full vigour of youth"

"Aye, that's it!" cried the unabashed Glabrish "And jolly well put, I call it Now, what's wrong with that! What have you to say against it?"

The guest, with his pride of gentle breeding and academic training, was separated from his commonplace host by barriers of contempt for such cheap-jack, conscienceless practice. With ominous calm he only repeated a further announcement of the label—"Doctor Glabrish attends at his residence daily for consultation! Ah! consulting physician, also!"

More complete opposites could never have faced each other Glabrish was, in Halberg's mind, a self-revealed cheat and an imposter doing actual harm to the community. Halberg knew at one glance that the "doctor's diploma" was a distinction which no qualified medical man would value or refer to The sample of the Elixir, and the label, had destroyed any lingering doubt as to the value of Glabrish's claim to medical training.

Randall had, by this time, taken just that amount of liquor which brought him to the angrily offensive stage, and the last cold-toned query acted like a whip to his splenetic mood.

"Ye-es," he snarled, "consulting physician, I am, and

I do 'em good, too Talk plainly to the poor beggars and let 'em talk to me—and, if it comes to that, I know a dickens of a lot more than you think I do about their anatomies Bah! You can sneer, with your aristocratic air, but——”

“I beg your pardon, Doctor Glabrish, pray don't forget I am a guest in your house ”

“Oh, hoighty, toighty! Don't do the grand duke on me! I tell you what you ought to know, that more than five-sixths of the diseases of the human body are caused by indigestion ”

“I am afraid I don't quite see what the inference is! ”

“Oh, don't you? Well, my Elixir helps the digestive organs Stimulates 'em and braces up the system generally, and what more does the average man or woman want. Besides, every blessed one of the great proprietary medicines are simple recipes Look at Gullaways' Pills, what are they? Father Riley's Syrup, or Novte's Fruit Saline? I tell you, they are every one based on plain, wholesome drugs mixed well and done up smartly, all to save folk trouble and do 'em good ”

“I am not acquainted with any of the authorities you mention Medical Science is the most complex and difficult thing to practise in, and I am unable to understand how you can seriously make the claim you do for your preparation or, since you will insist on discussing the matter, of what possible use consultation can be without a full diagnosis Every individual organism is, of course, a separate thing, and, though general principles apply——but I fear we must inevitably disagree upon this subject ”

Glabrish primed himself with another full glass. “Oh, don't be in a hurry,” he said, now raging with hate, “I want to have my say Something on my mind You seem to know a bit Now look here, Halberg! You've got my darling Adelaide, and, by God, she looks none too grand. I gather you are not doing over well in your line ”

“Sir——!”

“Oh, shut up a bit! and let me talk It's my sister I'm thinking of, not you The man who has Adelaide ought

to give her a good time, and you don't seem to be able to. Now, see here! You are a clever, high-up chap, but you'll never make money. Too uppish. Now, I can make money. You see this place. Not bad, eh? Well, if you want it right from the shoulder and no blooming nonsense, I've made it out of the fools. It is the fools who make doctors rich! There's more than one fool born in every town each day. I mean to have my share of the plunder. See now, I want a new drug-mixer or dispenser. You've studied medicine, you say. No doubt you know enough for me and more. Now, hear me! I'll give you three pounds a week to look after my prescribing, to advise me if I should go wrong with my consultations! You can do your writing business in your spare time. Now what do you say to that?"

Glabrish was a bully, but not often quite so clumsy as in this instance. Whether he really meant his impudent offer seriously or not, he certainly believed that the sight of money modified all men's opinions and judgments, and he had conceived a mad desire to have that proud, poor aristocrat bend to his will.

Frederick Halberg, with intensely white face, had started up in a fierce rage. He just managed to say with steady voice, "It will be impossible for me to remain in the house of one who does not hesitate to insult his guest."

But Glabrish had gone beyond caring for consequences. He rose, too, now slightly swaying.

"Oh, hang you and your fine manners! Talk to me like a man to a man. See what I mean?—I'll tell you what I think of you. You're a proud nobody, and you'll never be worth a thousand pounds. I am a plain somebody, and I'm worth forty thousand to-day, and I'll be worth a hundred thousand before I die. You come here, sneering at me! Despise me, don't you? I know you do. But you've got my Adelaide and you're not her sort. She wanted a man who could give her a decent house and a carriage, and she ought to have them. Go on, say what you have to say, and be done with it, my lord, blooming duke of a dust heap!"

Then Frederick Halberg lost the slender remains of his self-control. The storm was up now.

"Since you have broken down all conditions which should restrain a host and a guest from heated personal dispute, I will say on. You have the effrontery to offer me a position under yourself, an ignorant charlatan, to assist you in robbing innocent people. I would beg my bread in the streets rather than help to make one penny out of such vileness. My God! Your sister has boasted to me for years of her brother 'the doctor,' and now I meet him at last. You are an ignorant and low-minded quack! You are an unarrested criminal, preying upon the most needy. They come to you in pain, scraping up out of their poverty the fees for your damnable mockery of advice and medicine. To supply any cure for their ailments you are as unqualified as your own footman. You rob them and send them away with a remedy not worth a farthing, and with a string of cruel lies. God in heaven! Your Elixir of Life! A common labourer I can respect, but a quack!"

During the speech, Glabrish had seemed more than once about to strike at his denouncer. In the midst of turmoil, pale Mrs. Glabrish had timidly entered, followed by Adelaide. She caught the last sentence of the torrent of words that rushed from her husband. She saw Randall gasping like a fish, and purple with rage.

Halberg managed to say, as they came in, "Very sorry indeed, Mrs. Glabrish, to be partly the cause of this scene. Adelaide, I regret it will be necessary to end our visit here to-morrow morning. Good-night, Mrs. Glabrish. Good-night to you, sir,"—and strode from the room, a majestic, white-faced figure, while Glabrish yelled curses, and was held struggling in the arms of his wife and sister. Adelaide locked the door and so kept her brother back.

COMMENT ON "THE QUACK"

THE two male voices needed in this episode constitute the main test for effective delivery. Be careful not to make Halberg at all emotional until his outburst at the close. For his speaking use practically no inflection, but use what is often referred to as a dry, aristocratic voice. Avoid the temptation to make Glabrish too common. Remember, the commonness he exhibits is a matter of degree; it is emphasized in this instance because he is at a disadvantage of which he is painfully conscious. In his professional, or more correctly, business interviews his manner of speaking would be one of his chief assets. It is upon matters like these—the type of voices to simulate—that your individual observation ought to guide you. Look out for the characters and models. They are to be found. Try to study from actual life the types you are seeking to impersonate. "But," someone may say, "these are the author's characters. Must I not follow his descriptions closely?" Even so, you must remember to correlate your own impressions with his.

You will find your studies trebled in interest when you can make your mind work eccentrically, as well as concentrically, that is, while doing justice to your author's conception, to test the same by your own first-hand observation.

Think! Think! Oh, Think!

THERE can be nothing better wherewith to conclude the guidance offered in this book than the following poem by George Eliot. It needs no comments but those which all sincere students will supply for themselves.

STRADIVARIUS

By GEORGE ELIOT

Your soul was lifted by the wings to-day
Hearing the master of the violin
You praised him, praised the great Sebastian too
Who made the fine Chaconne, but did you think
Of old Antonio Stradivari?—him
Who a good century and half ago
Put his true work in that brown instrument
And by the nice adjustment of its frame
Gave it responsive life, continuous
With the master's finger-tips and perfected
Like them by delicate rectitude of use
Not Bach alone, helped by fine precedent
Of genius gone before, nor Joachim

made our joy to-day
Another soul was living in the air
And swaying it to true deliverance
Of high invention and responsive skill—
That plain white-aproned man who stood at work
Patient and accurate full fourscore years,
Cherished his sight and touch by temperance,
And since keen sense is love of perfectness
Made perfect violins, the needed paths
For inspiration and high mastery
No simpler man than he he never cried,
“Why was I born to this monotonous task
Of making violins?”

Hence neighbours in Cremona held him dull,
 Called him a slave, a mill-horse, a machine,
 Begged him to tell his motives or to lend
 A few gold pieces to a loftier mind.
 Yet he had pithy words full fed by fact;

Thus Antonio

Made answers as tact willed, and made them strong
 Naldo, a painter of eclectic school

Knowing all tricks of style at thirty-one,
 And weary of them, while Antonio
 At sixty-nine wrought placidly his best
 Making the violin you heard to-day—
 Naldo would tease him oft to tell his aims.

“Perhaps thou hast some pleasant vice to feed—
 The love of louis d’ors in heaps of four,
 Each violin a heap—I’ve nought to blame;
 My vices waste such heaps But then, why work
 With painful nicety? Since fame once earned
 By luck or merit—oftenest by luck—
 (Else why do I put Bonifazio’s name
 To work that ‘pinxit Naldo’ would not sell?)
 Is welcome index to the wealthy mob
 Where they should pay their gold, and where they
 pay
 There they find merit—take your tow for flax,
 And hold the flax unlabelled with your name,
 Too coarse for sufferance”

Antonio then

“I like the gold—well, yes—but not for meals.
 And as my stomach, so my eye and hand,
 And inward sense that works along with both,
 Have hunger that can never feed on coin
 Who draws a line and satisfies his soul,
 Making it crooked where it should be straight?
 An idiot with an oyster-shell may draw
 His lines along the sand, all wavering,
 Fixing no point or pathway to a point,

An idiot one remove may choose his line,
 Straggle and be content; but God be praised,
 Antonio Stradivari has an eye
 That winces at false work and loves the true,
 With hand and arm that play upon the tool
 As willingly as any singing bird
 Sets him to sing his morning roundelay,
 Because he likes to sing and likes the song "

Then Naldo. "'Tis a petty kind of fame
 At best, that comes of making violins;
 And saves no masses, either 'Thou wilt go
 To purgatory none the less "

But he

"'Twere purgatory here to make them ill;
 And for my fame—when any master holds
 'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
 He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
 Made violins and made them of the best.
 The masters only know whose work is good
 They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill
 I give them instruments to play upon,
 God choosing me to help Him "

"What! were God

At fault for violins thou absent?"

"Yes,

He were at fault for Stradivari's work "

"Why, many hold Guiseppe's violins
 As good as thine."

"Maybe they are different.

His quality declines: he spoils his hand
 With over-drinking But were his the best,
 He could not work for two My work is mine,
 And, heresy or not, if my hand slacked
 I should rob God—since He is fullest good—
 Leaving a blank instead of violins

I say, not God Himself can make man's best
 Without best men to help Him I am one best
 Here in Cremona, using sunlight well
 To fashion finest maple till it serves
 More cunningly than throats, for harmony.
 'Tis rare delight I would not change my skill
 To be the Emperor with bungling hands
 And lose my work, which comes as natural
 As self at waking "

"Thou art little more
 Than a deft potter's wheel, Antonio,
 Turning out work by mere necessity
 And lack of varied function Higher arts
 Subsist on freedom—eccentricity—
 Uncounted inspirations—influence
 That comes with drinking, gambling, talk turned
 wild,
 Then moody misery and lack of food—
 With every dithyrambic fine excess
 These make at last a storm which flashes out
 In lightning revelations. Steady work
 Turns genius to a loom, the soul must lie
 Like grapes beneath the sun till ripeness comes
 And mellow vintage. I could paint you now
 The finest Crucifixion; yesternight
 Returning home I saw it on a sky
 Blue-black, thick-starred I want two lous d'ors
 To buy the canvas and the costly blues—
 Trust me a fortnight "

"Where are those last two
 I lent thee for thy Judith?—her thou saw'st
 In saffron gown, with Holofernes' head
 And beauty all complete?"

"She is but sketched:
 I lack the proper model—and the mood
 A great idea is an eagle's egg,
 Craves time for hatching; while the eagle sits
 Feed her."

“If thou wilt call thy pictures eggs,
I call the hatching, Work 'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands: He could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio Get thee to thy easel.”